Multicultural Discourses in Turbulent Times

Edited and with a Foreword by

Alexandra Cotoc, Octavian More, Mihaela Mudure



Presa Universitară Clujeană

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Foreword

This collection includes a selection of the papers read during the *7th International Conference on Multicultural Discourses* co-organized on 24 and 25 October 2020 by the English Department of the Faculty of Letters, Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania, and the School of Contemporary Chinese Communication Studies, Hangzhou Normal University, China.

International conferences on this topic were initiated in 2002, in China, by professor Shi-xu. In 2016 the Conference moved to the University of Sao Paolo, Brazil, in 2018 it was hosted by Tilburg University in the Netherlands, and then in 2020 it was hosted by Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Researchers from the USA, China, India, Japan, Jordan, Turkey, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom, Estonia, Italy, Slovakia, or Ukraine became the virtual guests of the oldest university in Romania. The Covid pandemic prevented direct physical participation but did not affect the vivid exchange of ideas and fruitful contacts between the participants. The participants read papers relating multicultural discourses to (anti)globalization, diversity, connectivity, globalism, security, conflict, war, peace, protectionism, (in)tangible borders, immigration, racism, the Developing World, and the Global South from multidisciplinary grounds. Last but certainly not least, the multicultural values of the digital, the multimodal, the literary, or the cinematic discourses were under scrutiny.

The conference reinforced the importance of the notion of cultural discourses, a new research topic whose validity cannot be clearly understood without taking into account the research of professor Shi-xu. His articles and books point and argue in favour of the cultural nature of human discourse and communication. As culture is saturated with power relations and power contestation, so is the discourse. The study of discourse from this perspective challenges epistemic and ideological hegemonies. Being aware that discourse is power and power is discourse paves the way for scholars from all areas to challenge the imposition of any imperialism.

The originality of professor Shi-xu's perspective is the deft combination between Marxism and Confucianism applied to discourse studies. On the one hand, the discourse is radically influenced by the culture and the society where it was created and whose values it transmits. This social and societal value is fundamental for any cultural discourse, and it is an original development of the relationship between base and superstructure as theorized in Marxist cultural theory. On the other hand, Shi-xu's perspective is deeply rooted in the tradition of Chinese culture, more precisely, in Confucianism. In an article published in 2016, Shi-xu made an emblematic statement. "Despite the difficulties, our objective remains clear: to achieve a culturally conscious, critical and creative form of discourse and communication scholarship that helps with the co-existence, harmony and prosperity of human communities".[1] Co-existence, harmony and prosperity are the result of practicing the Confucian virtues. Opposing entities can co-exist in harmony, according to Confucianism. This idea is extremely important for the turbulent times we live in. In other words, the study of cultural discourses should not lead to the superiority of one discourse over another, but to the valorisation of the ideological variety of the contemporary world. This important tenet inspired the selection of the essays from this collection.

Mankind is witnessing global transformations; the world is rife with grave challenges, yet teeming with great opportunities. The papers from this collection belong to researchers who are at various stages in their professional lives and who rely on a wide range of methods in order to approach the discourse from a cultural perspective with historical or contemporary connotations. Scholars from such fields as communication, (new) media, language, literature, society, culture, or linguistics and education do their best to answer the nowadays uncertain winds of change.

The papers have been divided into three chapters: Cultures and Discourses, Literature and (Multi)Cultural Discourses, Linguistics and Education. Within all these chapters, the papers are set in alphabetical order according to the author's or first author's last name. The collection proves that

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[1] Shi-xu (2016) "Cultural Discourse Studies through the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*: 10 years on" *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, vol.11, issue 1, 2016, pp. 1-8. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17447143.2016.1150936

the conference was an open field of discussions among scholars coming from an amazing variety of academic and political backgrounds. This book also demonstrates the richness and the benevolent versatility of the notion of cultural discourse welcoming various approaches and also adding a communicative plus to all the previous discussions of culture, literature, language or education.

The articles were edited as follows: Alexandra Cotoc (Dánie Marcelo de Jesus and Vicente Tchalian; Denise Silva Paes Landim; Andréa Machado de Almeida Mattos and Mariana Adriele Coura; María Laura Pardo; Elizabeth Woodward-Smith), Octavian More (Sharon Diane King; Begoña Lasa-Álvarez; María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia; Monica Manolachi; Kamila Mirasova; Raluca-Andreea Petruș), Mihaela Mudure (Gönül Bakay; Loredana Bercuci; Constantina Raveca Buleu; Luiza Caraivan; Cristina Chevereșan; Tarek Musleh; Jing Yu).

The Editors

Cultures and Discourses

Multicultural Discourses on the Connections between Native Americans and Europeans in the Long Eighteenth Century[1]

Begoña LASA-ÁLVAREZ

1. Introduction

During the long eighteenth century, Atlantic interchanges were central for an increasing number of European and American people. Dialogue had been of great importance ever since the two Continents made contact. Yet it was during this period, coinciding with the initial steps of Imperialism and Capitalism, plus the Industrial Revolution, that communication became especially significant. A variety of exchanges existed, the most prominent being the exchange through travellers who crossed the Atlantic, sometimes repeatedly. Hence, Atlantic or transatlantic studies are of particular relevance for a greater understanding of these contact phenomena. On the one hand, events in one place had an impact in others, provoking, as John Elliott put it: "the creation, destruction, and re-creation of communities as a result of the movement, across and around the Atlantic basin, of people, commodities, cultural practices, and values" (239). On the other hand, as David Armitage noted, the history of the Atlantic has been seen as of particular interest in the early-modern period, looking in detail at events which took place from the first crossing of the Atlantic by Columbus to the historical moment contemplated in this paper, the eighteenth century (see 11-12).

[1] The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the following projects and institutions: Research project "Portal Digital de Historia de la traducción en España" (ref. PGC2018-095447-B-I00, the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities-State Agency for Research-AEI / ERDF-UE), and the Research Group of Modern and Contemporary Literature and Language (CLIN), University of A Coruña.

For a variety of reasons, many Europeans were interested in exploring the American continent, and thus they established significant connections with the Native peoples there. Most importantly, a great number of their experiences were recorded in written works of one type or another, many of which circulated extensively through well-established transnational and transatlantic networks, their exotic nature being particularly attractive to readers. This is especially so in the case of interethnic love relationships, in which cultural differences were so relevant. A well-known example was the story of the Baron of Saint-Castins (1652-1707), a French noble and military man, who lived more than 20 years among the Abenaki people and who married a woman native to this tribe. His life was documented by another French nobleman, the Baron of Lahontan (1666-c.1716), in his travel writings, and served as an inspiration for various subsequent writers. New versions of these stories circulated mainly in the periodical press, whose miscellaneous nature fitted them perfectly. Indeed, the new texts enjoyed several lives, crossing geographical, linguistic and generic borders, and were adapted to different audiences, each with its specific idiosyncrasies. As Sanders noted, the "process of adaptation is constant and ongoing" (24) and the case under study here is a clear instance of this process. The current paper, then, will examine the multicultural discourses in texts derived from Lahontan's travel narratives, which depicted connections between the Native Americans and the Europeans, focusing particularly on the analysis of interethnic love and sex relationships.

Lahontan, like many other travellers in the eighteenth century, inaugurated what Mary Louise Pratt called "a new territorial phase of capitalism" (9) by extending their journeys into the interior of the American continent in search of raw materials and new commercial opportunities. During their travels, Europeans had to negotiate "previously unimagined manifestations of difference" (Bowers and Chico 6), and those who wrote and recorded them had to exploit diverse strategies to make the New World intelligible and "commensurable in any degree with the only world which they knew" (Pagden 48). Fictional texts about seduction and sentiment played a crucial role in reflecting the dynamics of European encounters with the Native Americans, in which native women were central figures,

particularly in interethnic relationships (see Bowers and Chico 9). Saint-Castins's story, as recounted by Lahontan, focused on commercial and financial particulars; however, its subsequent fictionalization capitalized on readers' attraction to the sentimental stories between colonists and natives, which in turn benefited from the notable growth of the periodical press during this century (see Pratt 86-88).

2. Baron of Lahontan's travel writings: The story of Saint-Castins

The Baron of Lahontan (1666-c.1716) was a French nobleman without a fortune, who opted for military career and was sent to America in 1683, when he was only 17. He served there for 10 years, but also had time to explore the area surrounding Quebec and the Great Lakes. Although he was in the American territories serving as a soldier, Lahontan, like many travellers at the time, "set out in search of useful knowledge" which "was regarded as crucial arm of the New Science of the late seventeenth century" (Thompson 45). Some years later, after returning to Europe, he published three books about his experiences on the American continent: *Nouveaux voyages de Mr le Baron de la Hontan, dans l'Amérique Septentrionale* (1703), *Mémoires de l'Amérique Septentrionale, ou la suite des voyage de Mr le Baron de Lahontan* (1703) and *Dialogues de M. le baron de Lahontan et d'un Sauvage* (1704). His travel books became bestsellers during the first half of the eighteenth century, with several editions and translations into various languages, and were also the source of numerous fictional works about Native Americans (see Johnson 202, Harvey 168).

Lahontan's accounts of his travels are entertaining and close to fictional narratives, as he himself claimed in the dedication to Frederic IV, the King of Denmark, in the second volume of his writings. He indicates that he writes as a traveller, not as a professional author, in a plain and natural style, since he was addressing "ce qui m'arrivoit" to a relative (Lahontan, *Nouveaux* n. p.). Indeed, he uses the epistolary style in the first volume, while the second is in the form of memoirs, also in the first person, and is arranged thematically. It is in the second volume that Lahontan describes his acquaintance with a French nobleman and soldier, the Baron of Saint-Castins (1652-1707). It is a

brief sketch, in which he narrates how this French officer serving in North America lived with a tribe of natives, the Abenakis, for more than 20 years: "Le Baron de Saint Casteins Gentilhomme d'Oleron en Bearn, s'est rendu si recommandable parmi les Abenkis depuis vingt & tant d'anneées, vivans à la Sauvage, qu'ils le regardent aujourd'hui comme leur Dieu tutelaire" (Lahontan, *Mémoires* 29). Saint-Castins learned the natives' language and customs, becoming their Great Chief, and married a native woman with whom he had several children. Besides, Saint-Castins acted as an intermediary between the British and the French governments in their border dealings and conflicts. According to Lahontan, he amassed a great fortune by trading: "plus de deux ou trois cens mille écus qu'il a dans ses coffres en belle monnoie d'or" (Lahontan, *Mémoires* 29), which he used to improve the situation of the members of his tribe.

However, it seems that the real Saint-Castins did not enjoy so prosperous a life in adopting the primitive simplicity of the natives; he did not become a chief, neither was he wealthy. By idealizing Saint-Castins' life, Lahontan depicted, in fact, the existence he himself desired to experience; that is, to leave behind the Old World and become a successful and respected patriarch among the native people, in harmony with nature (see Harvey 184). Lahontan's personal circumstances are instrumental in understanding this position. After losing his status and possessions due to the political corruption in France, he "seizes on the character of the Indians as a rhetorical counterfoil" (Ellingson 66) to denounce the injustices and wrongs of Western society. Indeed, in the third of his travel books, Lahontan constructed the fictionalized figure of Adario, a Huron chief, with whom Lahontan maintains an imaginary dialogue in order to expose the adverse features of civilization. Adario is a primitive and innocent man, but he defends his opinions intelligently and very eloquently. This is why Lahontan was considered one of the founders of the myth of the Noble Savage (see Harvey 167), which would subsequently be developed in the writing of authors such as Rousseau (see Ellingson 1-2).

Besides Saint-Castins's way of life with the Native Americans, which was exploited as a model for interethnic relationships in later fictional narratives,

in terms of sex and gender relations, the section devoted to "Amours et Mariages des Sauvages" in Lahontan's second volume is particularly interesting. Information is given on diverse topics, some of which would have shocked European readers, and precisely for this reason might have attracted their attention, notably the alleged native women's promiscuity and the possibility of easily dissolving marriages. Lahontan's words about young native women, in fact, sound very similar to our current discourse about women's right to make their own decisions about their bodies: "Il leur est permis de faire ce qu' elles veulent; les Pères, les mères, frères, sœurs, &c. n'ont rien à dire sur leur conduite: ils dissent qu'elles sont Maitresses de leurs corps, qu'elles sont libres de faire ce qu'elles veulent par le droit de liberté" (Lahontan, *Mémoires* 144-145). The young women are also able to choose their partners for sexual intercourse, and Lahontan also mentions that they take plants and herbs as a means of avoiding pregnancy (see 146).

There is a passage in this section that might be considered controversial, in that it incites French men, and by extension European men generally, to see single native women simply as a sexual resource, in that Lahontan clearly states that they prefer French men to those of their own nation (see 147). In Lahontan's opinion, the reason is that the native men are typically concerned that frequent sex deprives them of the vigour and strength needed for their daily activities, such as hunting and fighting, while Europeans have no such concerns, and hence are more passionate (see 143).

Regarding marriage, Lahontan depicts the ceremony both by means of words and images, as can be observed in Figure 1. As noted above, they can dissolve their marriage if they consider it necessary: "Il est permis à l'homme & à la femme de se séparer quand il leur plait. […] Il faut remarquer que ces séparations se font sans dispute, querelle ni contradiction. Les femmes sont aussi libres que les hommes de se marier à qui bon leur semble" (150). However, while they are married they are absolutely faithful to one another. Furthermore, Native Americans understand marriage as a form of companionship or friendship: "ils se contentent d'une amitié tendre […], ils aiment si tranquilement qu'on pourroit appeller leur amour une simple bien-veillance" (144).

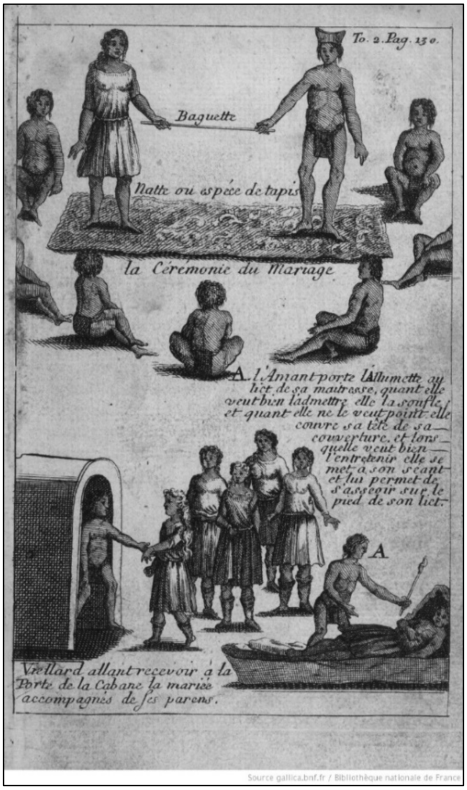


Figure 1. "La cérémonie du Mariage", in Lahontan's *Mémoires de l'Amérique Septentrionale, ou la suite des voyage de Mr le Baron de Lahontan* (130)[2]

The issues relating to sex and marriage in Lahontan's texts were totally contrary to European laws and religious and moral conventions, yet featured frequently in sentimental fiction, in that they offered attractive plot lines. A good example of this can be observed in the narratives to be examined in what follows.

3. A short story in the French and the British press

Years later, various material from Lahontan's travel writings, such as the anecdote about Saint-Castins, ethnographic details about natives' habits and customs, as well as the general idea about Indians as Noble Savages, were used to create a short narrative entitled "Azakia: anecdote huronne", thus emphasizing

[2] In the public domain in *Gallica (BNF)*: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b2300011c.item.

the role of the heroine in the story, as well as her native tribe. It was first published anonymously in the *Mercure de France* in 1763, a French periodical which was at one time edited by the well-known and prolific writer François Marmontel (1723-1799). He contributed notably to the development of the short story as a narrative genre in France, devoting space in the *Mercure* to this form of fiction (see Astbury). Indeed, the eighteenth-century periodical press, with its miscellaneous content, embraced effortlessly these short narratives, which were often directly pirated from other sources, without mentioning the original (see Sullivan 159), as happened in this case.

Among the writers who contributed with short stories to the *Mercure* was Nicolas Bricaire de la Dixmerie (1731-1791), the author of "Azakia". The story, which was originally published anonymously, reappeared years later in the collection *Contes philosophiques et moraux* (1765), in which Bricaire included most of the *contes* that he had written for the *Mercure*. In the preface to this collection, Bricaire explains his interest in gathering all the information necessary for the creation of his stories, while he keeps as faithful as possible to his sources: "J'ai peint jusqu'aux moeurs & aux amours des Sauvages, nouveauté qui a paru plaire. J'ai consulté les usages de chaque pays où j'ai placé l'intrigue de tel ou tel Conte. Chacun d'eux en est le tableau fidèle" (xi-xii).

Bricaire's *conte* enjoyed considerable success, and was translated into English, German, Swedish, and Portuguese (see Johnson 207-208), as well as being used as the inspiration for operas, dramas and poems (see Johnson 209). The English translation was first published in 1767 in the *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, under the title "Azakia, a Canadian Story", and later on in the Irish periodical, *Hibernian Magazine, or, Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge*, in 1783. As subsequent versions of the story were published in different cultures, its title underwent successive changes, depending on which character was considered to be the focus point of the narrative. In the British translations Azakia is still the main protagonist; however, the reference to the Canadian territories is preferred. Both the English *Universal Magazine* and the Irish *Hibernian Magazine* were very successful and, like many other journals of the time, provided educational material to schools and families (see Sullivan 159). They both reproduce Bricaire's story quite faithfully, although they

changed the title, which refers in this case not to the Native American tribe, but to the European name for part of the North of the American continent.

The short story begins with some horrifying details about the ancient inhabitants of Canada, who did indeed eat the first French men to arrive to their territories; however, following the continuous presence of the Europeans in Canada, the latter were able "to create in them [Native Americans] wants which made their yoke necessary to them" (196), this referring to alcohol and tobacco. However, after this impactful introduction, a sentimental story follows. As Mary Louise Pratt noted, this was one of the most powerful models in terms of representing colonial relations (see 87). Furthermore, in the second half of the eighteenth century, in an expanding literary market, travel narratives tended to be embellished in terms of their sensibility and an eroticized vocabulary in order to fulfil and further provoke the desires of readers (see Pratt 87).

Very early in the story the freedom and the peculiar behaviour of the young native women, as originally depicted by Lahontan, are reproduced in very similar terms: "They have a strong propensity to love; a propensity which a maiden in this country may yield to, and always indulges without scruple, and without fearing the least reproach. It is not so with a married woman: She must be intirely [sic] devoted to him she has married" (196). Indeed, Berkin, who has studied the condition and circumstances of women in Colonial America, notes that premarital sex was permitted in most Indian societies (see 66), a fact that suggested the possibility for European men to easily obtain casual sex with native women. This indeed may have led to the initial incident of the story, in which the female protagonist, Azakia, is attacked by a French soldier with the clear intention of abusing her. It is at this moment that St. Castins appears to rescue the young girl.

After the incident in the forest, in which Saint-Castins, or Celario as he was known among the Indians, rescues Azakia, a kind of love triangle is developed in the main plot, since she is married to the Indian chief. Celario had initially entered the forest to escape trouble with law, following a duel. He intended to take refuge among the natives, and Azakia, in gratitude for his having rescued her, takes him to the place where she lives. Her husband, Ouabi, also shows gratitude and hospitality to Celario by welcoming him

warmly. A relationship of friendship and even of filial love is established between the two men, which is hampered by the attraction that Celario feels for Ouabi's beautiful wife.

Celario begins to live with the natives and participates in their tribal fights. When he is injured, Ouabi installs him in his own tent and it is Azakia who takes care of him:

> One would have said that it was a lover watching over the precious life of her beloved. Few could help drawing the most flattering consequences on such an occasion; and this was what St. Castins did. His desires and hopes revived with his strength. One only point disconcerted his views, which was the services and attentions of Ouabi. Could he deceive him, without adding ingratitude to perfidy? (197)

But he finally loses control and he declares his love to Azakia. She is absolutely loyal to her husband and Celario decides that he should leave. Azakia wants him to stay, as she loves him like a friend, and offers him another young girl, Zisma, who might provide him with what she could not, but this does not work. For a European readership, such an event constitutes shocking behaviour on the part of the natives, perhaps seen as a consequence of the previously mentioned sexual freedom that young Indian girls were said to enjoy. In Bricaire's *conte* and the versions published in British and American journals, when Celario expresses his feeling towards Azakia, she explains to him how marriage works among them, a ritual which is a replica of Lahontan's account: "the shivers of the rod which I have broken with Ouabi have not yet been reduced to ashes. A part remains still in his power, and another in mine. As long as they last, I am his, and cannot be thine" (197).

However, at the end of the story, after Celario has saved Ouabi's life twice, Ouabi offers Azakia to Celario, out of gratitude: "Celario, said he, thou hast saved my life, and what is still dearer to me, thou hast twice preserved to me Azakia. She therefore belongs more to thee than to me" (199-200). As natives "separate as easily as they come together", it is said that Azakia "was reinstated in all the rights of a maiden" (200) and she could marry Celario. Thanks to the intervention of some missionaries, he is also able to marry Azakia according to Christian rules. Moreover, Ouabi marries the young Zisma, and the two couples end up "equally happy".

4. A short story and a poem in America

The same story was subsequently published on the other side of the Atlantic in 1789, in a periodical of miscellanies, which reproduced the narrative previously published in Britain under the identical title, "Azakia, a Canadian story". American editors and printers took advantage of the lax copyright law in the British Isles, which facilitated the publication of the great bulk of European and British literature in America, in that it was in the public domain (see Gross 321). Hence, Mathew Carey, the editor of *The American Museum; or Repository of Ancient and Modern Fugitive Pieces, etc. Prose and Poetical*, included the same version of the story of Azakia in the sixth volume of the periodical, which was both politically and culturally liberal, and had distinguished subscribers from the new American republic, such as George Washington, Benjamin Rush and Perez Morton (see Carr 76-77).

Interestingly, Perez Morton's wife, Sarah Wentworth Morton (1759-1846), a celebrated writer and *salonnière* in New England, used the short story as an inspiration for her narrative poem *Ouâbi, or The Virtues of Nature, An Indian Tale in Four Cantos*, published in Boston, in 1790. Morton belonged to one of the most influential families in Boston and was an admired writer. Indeed, she was depicted as "the Sapho of America" in the *Massachusetts Magazine* in 1791 (Vietto 107). She mainly wrote poetry, and besides the poem to be examined here, she published three other narrative poems in the last decade of the eighteenth century: *The African Chief* (1792), *Beacon Hill. A Local Poem* (1797) and *The Virtues of Society. A Tale Founded on Fact* (1799). Years later, in 1823, she published a miscellany, *My Mind and Its Thoughts, in Sketches, Fragments, and Essays* (1823), in which she compiled several poems and essays. In her literary compositions, Morton showed herself to be an American patriot, a committed abolitionist, and an advocate of Native American culture (see Ellison 61, Carr 69).

Ouâbi, or The Virtues of Nature was published in a volume of just 52 pages, including in its title the name of the Indian Chief, as in Morton's narrative, this character playing a notable role, particularly at the ending. The poem is accompanied by various paratextual elements: it opens with a remarkable frontispiece in which the readers see an initial depiction of the plot (Figure 2) which involves three main characters. In the introduction, the author explains different aspects of the sources of her text, alluding to Mathew Carey's *The American Museum*, but also mentioning a friend, General Lincoln (1733-1810),

to whom she is indebted for the information on "the local rites and customs" included in the text (Morton vi). In the poem, these two sources are present in two distinct and clearly differentiated sections: the poem is reserved for the fictional events themselves, and there are also a great number of footnotes to explain the natives' customs and traditions, including war cries, death songs, and the translation into English of some words in the Native language.

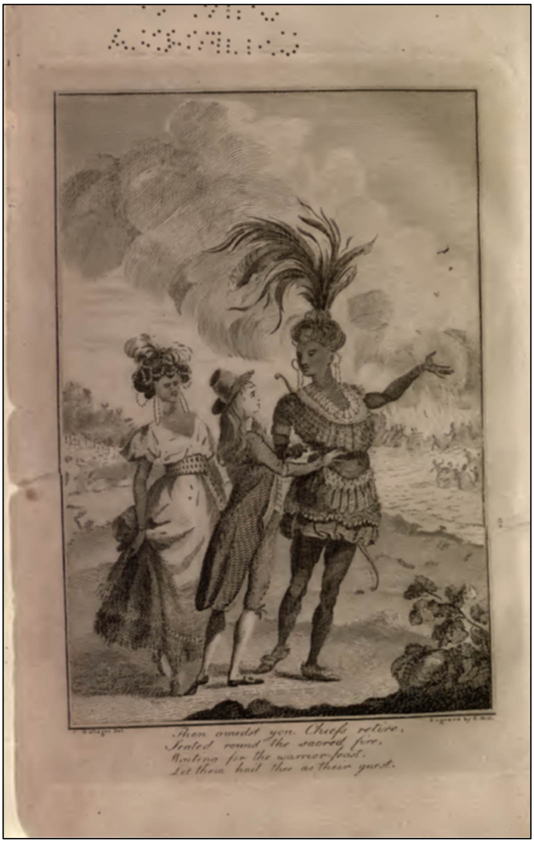


Figure 2. Frontispiece, in Morton's *Ouâbi*, or *The Virtues of Nature, An Indian Tale in Four Cantos* (n. p.)[3].

Besides the transposition from prose to poetry, Morton decided to introduce various alterations to the plot, which she acknowledged in the introduction:

> Many of the outlines of the Fable are taken from a prose story in Mr Carey's entertaining and instructing Museum; but as the opening scene of that narrative

[3] In the public domain in *Hathi Trust Public Library*: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t41r6nz9t&view=1up&seq=9&skin=2021.

> was rather deficient in decency, and the conclusion, in my opinion, very little interesting, I have entirely changed it in those aspects, and have introduced a variety of customs, the description of battles, and many other circumstances, which appeared essential to poetry, and necessary to the plot; still I acknowledge myself indebted to that production for many of the events, and for the names of the characters. (vi)

Thus, in Morton's verses, Azakia is not attacked by a French soldier, but by an Indian from an enemy tribe and the reference to native women's rather free sexual behaviour or promiscuity is omitted. Morton prefers to concentrate on Azakia's virtues as a married woman, who is wholly faithful to her husband, and the same version of events would appear in subsequent prose versions of the poem. Morton explains the Native women's attitude in a footnote:

> The Indian women of America are very chaste after marriage, and if any person makes love to them they answer, 'The Friend that is before my eyes, prevents my seeing you.' (13).

From this moment on, Morton follows the plot line previously described, and she also includes Azakia's explanation about her marriage to Ouabi, but the writer also adds a footnote describing this custom:

> The marriage contract of the North American Indians is not necessarily during life, but while the parties continue agreeable to each other. The ceremony is performed by their mutually breaking small shivers or sticks of wood in the presence of their friends, which are carefully deposited in some safe place, till they wish a separation; when with like ceremony the sticks are thrown into the sacred fires, and the marriage consequently dissolved. Mrs Brooks observes[4], that the greatest obstruction to the conversion of the Canadian Indians to Christianity, was their reluctance at forming marriages for life. (24)

Morton also alludes to the divorce between Azakia and Ouabi, and the new marriage between her and Celario, but there is no Christian sanction of this. Nevertheless, as she notes in the "Preface," the American writer changes entirely the final section of the story, with Ouabi dying unexpectedly at the

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[4] Morton alludes to Frances Brooke's novel *The History of Emily Montague*, considered to be the first Canadian novel. In Letter XI of the first volume, one of the characters, Colonel Rivers, describes Native Canadians' attitude towards Christian marriage:

> They held adultery in abhorrence, and with the more reason as their marriages were at pleasure. The missionaries are said to have found no difficulty so great in gaining them to Christianity, as that of persuading them to marry for life: they regarded the Christian system of marriage as contrary to the laws of nature and reason; and asserted that, as the *Great Spirit* formed us to be happy, it was opposing his will, to continue together when otherwise. (Brooke 35)

end. By means of this strategy, Morton is able to incorporate some epic features into the character of the Indian Chief, who becomes the symbol of the virtues of nature, a significant concept in the poem, as reflected in the title. She even transforms him into the emblem of the Noble Savage, to whom all future generations should pay tribute:

> There shall he rest! and if in realms of day,
> The GOOD, the BRAVE, diffuse a light divine,
> Redoubled splendor gilds the brighten'd ray,
> Which bids Ouabi's NATIVE VIRTUES shine! (50)

Morton's poem clearly propounds the notion that men in a natural state are good, like Ouabi, who is the embodiment of all virtues: he is wise, rational, grateful, hospitable, and is free from duplicity. Yet, similar virtues can also be found in a Native woman like Azakia, who is portrayed in terms of innocence, fidelity, loyalty, honesty, generosity and gratitude. Hence, both represent the virtues of nature, not just Ouabi. The American author emphasizes this element by contrasting the Native American virtues to the vice of the Europeans. Indeed, Celario responds to a question from Ouabi about the characteristics of a civilized society with a long list of vices: revenge, malice, duplicity, slander, insolence, pride, envy, negligence, fear, jealousy, suspicion, fraud, reproach, meanness, affectation and treachery (17), all of these being vices and excesses that corrupt the human being. Therefore, at the end of her poem Morton proposes that one should pay homage to those who personify all the virtues of nature. Curiously enough, at the end of the poem Ouabi dies, which might refer to the loss of everything positive that human beings have in their natural state and the triumph of the degrading effects of civilization.

5. A short story in the Bibliothèque britannique and the Biblioteca británica

Morton's poem crossed the Atlantic once more and was used as the source for a short story published in *Bibliothèque britannique*, a French miscellany published in the city of Geneva. The numerous volumes of this publication appeared periodically in instalments and comprised diverse materials, usually taken from the British press and proving the traditional connection between Geneva and Anglophone culture. The *Bibliothèque britannique* was published between 1796 and 1815 by the brothers Marc-

Auguste and Charles Pictet and their friend Frédéric Guillome Maurice. Its volumes followed a thematic division, "Sciences et Arts", "Agriculture" and "Littérature". Nevertheless, the editors of the magazine had a much broader understanding of literature than today (see Bickerton 490). Thus, they mention in the "Preface" to Volume 13 dedicated to "Littérature" that this section will include texts on education, political economy, travel, fine arts, biographies and fiction (see Bickerton 4-11). Fictional texts are the most abundant, but closely followed by travel writing (see Bickerton 513), which illustrates the great popularity of exotic and far-away topics at the time.

The title of the story now changed to "Azakia et Celario, Conte", which concentrates on the interethnic relationship, leaving Ouabi as a secondary character. The story was published in Volume 8 of the collection (see 95-121). In a footnote the short story is said to have been based on a previous poem published in Boston (see 95). The story opens in a very different manner, stating the superiority of the European civilized colonists, who, unlike the Natives, were able to extract and exploit all the resources that the rich territories of the new continent provided (see 95-96). As for the love triangle, the development of the characters is similar; however, in the Genevan version the dénouement proposed is far more in accord with the Western habits. Here, Ouabi also dies at the end of the story, but his death does not involve the epic connotations expressed by Morton, and is exploited very differently. The Indian Chief is rescued by Celario when he was about to be killed by his enemies. Although badly injured, the Chief arranges Celario's and Azakia's marriage on his deathbed, since his wife is going to be free to marry someone else after his death. Interestingly, in this new version the allusions to a marital breakdown and to unmarried girls' promiscuity are omitted, thus avoiding the inclusion of certain events, which collided so strongly with the prohibitions and the taboos regarding sex in Western societies (see Sayre 331). Hence, the ending of this version is far more conventional and even the future roles proposed by Ouabi for Celario and Azakia as husband and wife are the traditional ones in any Western culture: Ouabi asks that Celario be fair and courageous, a model for any leader and warrior, and that Azakia should be obedient and faithful, an example for any good wife (see 120). Furthermore, although the Chief's attributes as a Noble Savage have been emphasized in various passages of the

account, once dead, he is praised for his qualities as a powerful warrior, not as a virtuous man (see 121).

Years later, in 1807, the Spanish journalist and editor Pedro M. de Olive translated some material from the Genevan publication and published them in a Spanish miscellany, the *Biblioteca británica*. However, his editorial venture was far more modest than the Genevan collection. It consisted of just two volumes, and thus the selection of the content to be included in the Spanish volumes had to be stricter. Among the short narratives chosen for the *Biblioteca británica*, Olive included "Azakia y Celario. Cuento" in the second volume (vol. II, pp. 85-108), a faithful translation of the French text. As it happened with the English and Irish periodicals mentioned above, Olive's magazine was addressed to parents and teachers so that its varied contents could be used to instruct children and young adults (see vol. I, p. 4).

Narratives of this type, which combined sentimentality and exoticism, enjoyed a certain success among the Spanish readership (see Carnero 174). Additionally, the issue of the Noble Savage, by this stage widely present in Europe, was also beginning to catch the attention of the Spanish (see Álvarez Barrientos 40). Thus, the story of Azakia and Celario was not only published in the *Biblioteca británica*, but years later it came out in a single volume under the title *Lucha de la virtud y las pasiones, y el triunfo de las dos, o Celario y Azakia, Novela indiana* (1835), and also, in 1861, as a kind of serialised fiction known as *folletín* in Spanish newspapers, such as the *Correo de Lugo*[5].

6. Conclusion

An analysis of the successive literary iterations of St. Castins's story, whose first avatar was an ethnographic sketch in Baron of Lahontan's popular travel writing, has revealed various discursive tendencies regarding European perceptions of Native Americans; namely the fascination with interethnic love relationships, particularly between a European man and a native woman. Furthermore, the stories were created as a response to the great curiosity in

[5] For the reception of Morton's poem in Spain, see Lasa Álvarez "La representación de los pueblos nativos norteamericanos en dos versiones españolas del poema narrativo *Ouâbi, or The Virtues of Nature* (1790) de Sarah Wentworth Morton."

Western societies about how native peoples actually behave, since they were frequently described as Noble Savages, living in a kind of natural heaven opposed to the corrupt civilized society. However, in the latest adaptations of the story, the distribution of roles proposed for the new couple of Azakia and Celario demonstrates how European culture was all-encompassing with regard to Native Americans. They were pressed to adopt new norms and values, such as the sanctification of their matrimonial relationship and the exclusion of divorce from the narrative, which was itself a source of women's loss of autonomy and their increasing dependence on men (see Berkin 77-78).

We might also note that Morton's text introduced the myth known as the vanishing Indian, which would ideologically mark the way in which European settlers and their descendants envisioned their connection to North American territories. The vanishing Indian would become a structural device in their writing on this issue (see Ellison 79). Certainly, the Indians are often killed heroically in tribal fighting, or ritually tortured while singing songs to defy their enemies. Although this myth would be pervasive in the nineteenth century, it can already be perceived in texts of the previous century, such as those here analysed. This notion, together with the myth of the Noble Savage, led to the pernicious consideration that the Native Americans, separated from their natural primitive state and trapped into the orbit of Western civilization, would inexorably disappear, in that they were not prepared for this cultural encounter. Thus, in Morton's poem and in the subsequent prose versions, as soon as the Indians meet a civilized colonist, Celario, he will, due to his superiority, replace the strongest Indian, the Indian Chief Ouabi, not only in the social sphere, as Celario becomes the new chief of the tribe, but also in the personal one, as he marries the Chief's wife.

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The Face of the Other at the End of the World: The TV Series *Good Omens*

Sharon Diane KING

The 2019 comedy/fantasy BBC miniseries *Good Omens*, based on the eponymous 1991 novel co-authored by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman, has been viewed, perhaps principally, as a fanciful take on the Western world's multi-decade preoccupation with doomsday, as indeed the novel had been (see Mangan, Foley, Clemons). It is true that one of the main thrusts of the series involves the bungled release of the AntiChrist into the world; another tracks the quirky followers of the prophecies of Agnes Nutter, a startlingly-prescient 17^{th}-century witch who correctly foretold all manner of matters eschatological and whose book proves to be of great assistance in saving the world *au moment juste*. It is equally true that within the series' framework, the overarching system narrative, known as The Divine Plan, has established the Bible-adjacent, good-versus-evil binary system Westerners are familiar with, in which the two sides, fixed since time immemorial, oppose and subvert each other, and anticipate a wholesale internecine conflagration at the narrative's terminus. But the series' sociopolitical story arc far outstrips the narrative thread of "doom and bust," a thread given new wind in its cultural sails—at least in the United States—by the current, socially violent obsession with conspiracy theories (see Balmer, Lawrence). Rather than merely delineating an apocalypse *manqué*, I suggest that *Good Omens* offers its viewers a way of describing and challenging the status quo of race (and queer) relations in the West through its skewed, often comical depictions of the supernatural, from God's bureaucracy, the angelic hosts, all the way on down to Satan and his begrimed minions. The Battle of Armageddon in *Good Omens* functions as an allegory for a large-scale war over race and sexual orientation, a war ultimately averted due to human and humane values prevailing—albeit with a goodly dose of supernatural

assistance. The series thus holds out a path of hope rather than annihilation for all the creatures in the world.

That the West's traditionally bifurcated overstructure of the celestial and the infernal should be used in *Good Omens* to point to and engage with the most mundane and earth-bound concerns should come as no great surprise. At least for Pratchett, this was standard practice. In his Discworld novels, as scholar Harriet Rosemary Allen has noted, "The pervasive stereotypes and motifs of the [fantasy] genre become vehicles for satirical commentary on a range of issues" (7). And the master satirist frequently used mythical or legendary creatures to allegorize races and the prejudices against them, as well as gender stereotypes. The Golem characters in the novels *Going Postal* and *Making Money*, for example, are artificially constructed but fully sentient beings that are still considered mere possessions by the human characters; they labour at the most ill-regarded tasks and are distrusted by much of the populace. This race of chattel-creatures eventually find the means to buy their way to freedom, assisted by a charity established to give these beleaguered beings some agency. Golems thus function to give an oblique commentary on America's (as well as other countries') fraught history of slavery and racism. In similar fashion, Allen argues, the diminutive race of dwarves of Discworld, binary gendered beings with nearly identical secondary sexual characteristics, challenge both racial (i.e. dwarvish) and gender expectations in Pratchett novels such as *Feet of Clay* and *The Fifth Elephant* (14, 46-47, 50-59). Noting that "through satire, …we are brutally made aware of many worldly problems," Zuleiyha Çetiner-Öktem further articulates how Pratchett's novels satirically counter gender stereotypes in different spaces within his fantastical world (100-112).

Still, a casual viewer of *Good Omens* might not perceive it as a satire on race and gender matters at all; indeed, the series could be considered a bellwether for its racial diversity and nontraditional gender casting. Though both the megastar lead actors are indeed white males (Michael Sheen and David Tennant), *Good Omens* largely subverts fusty Hollywood stereotypes, and its casting is often startlingly inclusive. The characters of Adam and Eve, presented in flashback scenes throughout the main narrative thread, are both played by black actors (male and female). The Archangel Michael is acted by a sharp-faced middle-aged white woman; the fly-ridden, diseased devil Beelzebub, a slightly younger white woman**.** The Archangel Uriel is a young

black woman. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse include a young white woman with red-dyed hair as War, and a thirty something black man as Famine. A young Asian woman with preternaturally pale eyes and dyed-blonde hair embodies the male character Pollution—a modern substitution explained in the novel as the Horseman Pestilence having retired following the invention of penicillin (see Gaiman and Pratchett 353). The fourth Horseman, Death enveloped in his shroud, has no visible race, though the character is voiced by an older white male actor (see Brian Cox). The heroine (though her efforts to save the world are mostly unfruitful) Anathema Device is Latinx. These and numerous other lesser or background characters provide constant visual challenges to centuries of Western racial and gender stereotyping in text and image. Yet the very diversity of the cast, the divergences from traditional Western depictions, serves as a clever misdirection. The Other (together with its flip side) comes in a different guise, hiding in plain sight.

For few Otherings in Western culture can rival the Christian-based dichotomy of Heaven and Hell, the celestial and the infernal. And regardless of any specific theological framework, in *Good Omens* the angelic and demonic realms constitute a kind of supercolonialism, "of domination and subordination among groups … constructed primarily on notions of difference; it is established and maintained in order to serve the interests of the dominant group…." (Buckman 89). Overwhelmingly and historically in the Western tradition, Heaven has been perceived as perfect, incorruptible, supreme in all aspects; Hell is consistently portrayed as debased, shameful, inferior both in power and morality. This opposition, as well as its close connection to the black/white antithesis, has a long history. Geraldine Heng details the medieval (and religious) underpinnings of such belief (see 16-23), delineating the characterization of blackness both as linked to human sin (and thus redeemable) and linked with the infernal—"the devil, the demonic … and the damned" (186). In the latter case, this connection is irrevocable, and following the logic of Christian theology, eternally fatal. In like manner, Heng describes the significance of "the ascension of *whiteness* to supremacy as a category of identity" to define Christian Europeans (44). It is this hermeneutic, I argue, that operates in *Good Omens*. Racial diversity in the cast notwithstanding, the dichotomy represented by the realms of heavenly and hellish in the series is effectively the social construct of whiteness, the dominant (white Western)

culture set against all else. In parallel with how whiteness functions within the Western tradition, the superiority of the celestial is perceived as a given, inherent, the default good, with all else being "not": deficient, unnecessary, even dangerous (see Ahmed 161-63).

The series is especially astute in visually conveying how, through the phenomenology of whiteness, "spaces acquire the shape of the bodies that 'inhabit' them" (see Ahmed 156). *Good Omens* makes abundant cinematographic use of the tropes of the stereotypical portrayals of angelic and demonic—light versus dark, clean versus dirty, pure versus perverted, sound versus sickly—to parallel the separation white privilege creates within the Western world. In scenes devoted to the meticulously-groomed angels attired in shimmering light colours, the figures sweep about with the self-same arched eyebrows and supercilious airs on earth as they do in heaven. And everywhere the angels appear—even in the scene when vain, figure-conscious Gabriel is seen putting his jogging suit to good use as he meets with Aziraphale on a country road—there is brightness and space around them, as if the heavenly host carried it with them (see Ahmed 160). Conversely, in scenes involving the infernal hordes, the grimy, pustulant, dusk-collared devils slouch and shamble about, growling and grimacing in dimly-lit landscapes as if there were nothing but night and naught / "not" in the world (see Ahmed 161). The contrast is stark, and it could not be more obvious.

Given the Christian theology that serves as framework for *Good Omens*, it should come as no surprise that the two opposing sides are also portrayed as polar opposites fixed in the firmament, immutably separated. "We are hereditary enemies,"[1] angel (technically, Principality) Aziraphale tells his demonic counterpart Crowley, echoing one of white privilege's main and most insidious beliefs: that "it has always been this way, and it always will" (Johnson 142-145). And until these two main characters, presumed to be seething with innate hatred for each other, begin veering off course into friendship, this irrevocable opposition seems to go utterly unchallenged. Neither demons nor angels question their fate; they would seem locked into a supernatural sociopolitical system like the "politics of inevitability" (Snyder 11) that

[1] This and all subsequent comments in quotations by characters in the comedy/ fantasy are directly cited from the 2019 TV miniseries *Good Omens*. A full reference to the series is included in the bibliography.

presumes no alternatives and will not challenge the status quo. Like the racial antipodes evoked in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the heavenly hosts "remain sealed in their whiteness" (Fanon 12). And this whiteness, assumed as the only good, is dismissive of everything but itself. While the hosts thronging Heaven show disdain for their infernal counterparts—"the other side," "the opposition"—their contempt for the beings upon earth is if anything more profound, and overwhelmingly reminiscent of entrenched white privilege. As an angelic squad investigates Aziraphale's bookshop—concerned that their celestial comrade seems to be neglecting his ultimate job of bringing about the Apocalypse—they callously, cheerfully contemplate Armageddon, the final battle that will literally put an end to all life on earth. A jocular, self-satisfied Gabriel lingers over an inane remark his companion makes: "*You can't have a war without war?* Hey, I might use that!" Later, he sneers at Aziraphale's contact with (and concern for) humanity: "Humans are so easily fooled." Conversely, within and without their infernal lair, the dishevelled demons' view of all things outside of hell is charged with resentment, mistrust, and fear; they, similarly, are sealed "in their blackness" (Fanon 12). Two dukes of Hell, tasked with giving demon Crowley his latest assignment, speculate grimly (though not incorrectly) that he has betrayed them by having "gone native" on earth, forsaking his obligations to his demonic brethren by his entangled contacts with humanity. Throughout the series, the iconic comparisons of the two sides—their scenes often immediately juxtaposed with each other—equally evoke class privilege and its lack. The begrimed demons lurk in a dark, dank, untidy, heap-ridden basement office Hell that is plagued with plumbing problems, while the crisply-uniformed angelic beings come and go in an empty, columned vastness of blinding, dazzling light and sterility. *Good Omens* seems to present two sides that both dislike each other and could not be more unlike each other.

And yet, perversely, they are more like than they are not. Through its filter of comedy, *Good Omens* calls this traditional dichotomy into question, showing up the utter lack of *fundamental* difference between the angelic race and the demonic. Both angels and demons show themselves to be serious, hardworking, devoted if passive functionaries of the Most High's plan for an apocalyptic finale for humankind. The officious demons criticize fellow operative Crowley for shirking his duties by lingering on the earth and being

lured into very human vices (or are they virtues?): keeping flashy cars, maintaining luxuriant houseplants, and going on rampant bouts of bibulousness. The celestial hosts, for their part, question and chastise Aziraphale for his seeming fecklessness—his "misplacing" (in reality handing off to Adam) the flaming sword that guarded the Garden of Eden is a running gag—and his gourmandish ways, evidenced by the slightly-protruding gut which an image-conscious Archangel Gabriel urges Aziraphale to lose. But while the celestial and infernal hosts' approaches to their tasks and their means of challenging their errant operatives may vary—the angels are smug, patronizing, self-congratulatory; the demons glum, sardonic, sarcastic—their underlying focus on getting the job done, on serving as cogs in a divine machine, could not be more alike. Both sides act in ways that are petty, vindictive, cold, pitiless toward anyone outside their own kind, including humanity. Both sides prove themselves doggedly committed to accomplish (via their complementary bureaucratic rubrics) the Divine Plan. This Plan, to be sure, is to culminate in the mother of all wars, the Apocalypse, supernatural stand-in for a monumental race war which, like Manson's vision of "Helter Skelter," should result in wiping out everything on the earth so that the world can begin anew. Both sides eagerly—and comically— anticipate the destruction they will facilitate, the demons relishing their role as "tools of that glorious destiny," the angels smirking, supremely confident in the outcome: "Of course there has to be a war. Otherwise, how do we win it?" And both sides, as we shall see, will resort to torture, even of their own kind, when their stranglehold on The Way Things Are Always Done is threatened. Despite the extreme visual contrasts the series offers, in no meaningful way are the angels and demons of *Good Omens* substantively different from each other. The narrative of inherence, of the "given" that is celestial privilege, is revealed as a fraud. Angelic and demonic characters may not know how their similar actions and attitudes undermine the Othering they believe separates them, but the audience cannot help but see through the sham.

This is even more the case with *Good Omens*' dual point-of-view characters: dandified, well-meaning, easily-flustered Principality Aziraphale, and tormented, Bohemian, slouching-away-from-Bethlehem demon Crowley. In this supernally unlikely, superbly likeable pair, viewers witness an even greater subversion of traditional Othering, as well as a glimmer of hope for the

world in their developing friendship. Both angel and demon begin as foundational personages to the unfolding of the Biblical narrative arc for humanity: Aziraphale (as we have noted) wields the flaming sword at the wall of the Garden of Eden, while Crowley slithers into the role of the serpent whose cunning, whispered temptations prompt Adam and Eve's banishment from it. Angel and demon are supposed to be in strictest opposition, enemies outright; and in their first encounter both do voice cautious affirmations of traditional prejudice against the other. Aziraphale toes the party line of Crowley being inherently bad: "You're a demon, it's what you do." Crowley shrugs off Aziraphale's fretting over his handing off his flaming sword to banished, defenceless Adam and Eve by averring the angelic ideal: "You're an angel. I don't think you *can* [do the wrong thing]." But even at this early juncture the script veers off, the stereotypes begin to break down. "Wouldn't that be funny, if I did the good thing, and you did the bad," tempter incarnate Crowley muses, and while the interchange is quickly laughed off, the question hangs in the air, as ever-too-merciful Aziraphale spreads his all-encompassing wings and shelters his infernal companion from a passing thundershower.

Thus begins this improbable pair's engagement, as their interaction continually pokes holes in the irrevocability of Otherness—the opposition of good and evil—established by the dominant power governing the Universe. The audience watches Aziraphale and Crowley appearing together—is it by chance? Design? Miracle?—at various key moments throughout history, ever more affected by the humaneness (as well as disheartened by the cruelty) of the human beings around them, and ever more affected by each other. Together they witness the start of the Great Flood, whose implications of mass slaughter appal celestial team-player Aziraphale: "You can't kill kids!" he winces as they note the gathering storm clouds. Angel and demon watch the suffering Christ at Golgotha, with bad-boy Crowley admitting it was he who had tempted the Sacrificial Lamb—unsuccessfully, of course—and questioning what Christ had said to bring on such torment to himself. "Be kind to each other," Aziraphale specifies, and Crowley's sad, if ironical rejoinder reminds us that he has drunk more than a sip from the well of empathy: "Yeah, that'd do it." Viewers see, as the millennia pass by, the pair's acquaintanceship broaden into a real relationship, becoming richer, riskier. Perennial gourmet and cultural junkie Aziraphale invites Crowley to be "tempted" (which is, Aziraphale clarifies

teasingly, a word more suited to a demon than an angel) to an oyster dinner in Imperial Rome. Much later, the angel arranges a supposedly "inconspicuous" rendez-vous at a rehearsal of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* at the Globe Theatre in 1601, where Crowley promises a "miracle" of summoning an audience to see the play's actual performance. For his part, risk-taker Crowley frequently uses his beloved hot-rod to chauffeur Aziraphale, who is terrified by his fast driving (a metaphor consciously evoked later on), and more than once comes to the rescue of his well-meaning but gullible friend. In one such instance, Crowley arrives at the last minute to release a despairing Aziraphale, caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, from a cell of the Bastille during the French Revolution. Similarly, during the London blitz of World War II, Crowley comes again to Aziraphale's rescue, hopping down the aisle of an abandoned church—his feet burning on its consecrated ground—when his luckless angel friend falls prey to double-crossing Nazi spies. It is notable that, Aziraphale having been reprimanded for using his miracles too "frivolously" upon hapless humanity, it is Crowley who as often as not uses his demonic powers to perform supernatural redemptions, as well as do his own merciful works. In this latter case, Crowley limits the scope of the bomb's destruction—it merely falls on the church with the Nazis inside—thus sparing much of war-shocked London from obliteration. His action also saves Aziraphale from the embarrassment of discorporation (also a running gag in the series), a gesture for which Aziraphale extends sincere, if sublimely understated, thanks: "That was kind of you."

Their friendship evolves naturally, if startlingly, into an odd sort of business arrangement, one once mocked as preposterous. The pair, upon confronting each other in King Arthur's mythical realm in Wessex (Aziraphale having been sent to foment peace and Crowley sow discord in human affairs), comes to the realization that each one's work is cancelling the other's out. Crowley, who had chafed at his role of "tool" in the demonic sphere, regardless of any "glorious destiny" attached to it, proposes that angel and demon team up to evade—covertly, to be sure—the tasks both find increasingly troubling. "Our respective home offices don't care how [a job] is done, so long as it gets crossed off the list," Crowley argues. And though Aziraphale fears abandoning the status quo of hegemonic privilege inherent in his role, he eventually agrees. At times their "arrangement" means they work together; at others, one takes

the assignment of both, so that, depending on the task, the good one does indeed perform the bad deed and the bad does the good. Each character works as the Other with a fluidity that bespeaks how truly similar they are. Even more than with the higher-up angels and demons, these two functionaries are increasingly revealed as neither irrevocable enemies nor polar opposites but individual identities imbued with the humanity that so fascinates them, and soon inseparably entwined.

Yet both are well aware of the terrible danger they are in, should the real nature of their relationship be uncovered. Even as they mock their prejudice against the Other—"Get thee behind me, foul fiend!" Aziraphale jestingly quotes at Crowley as he opens the door to his bookshop for the demon, followed by a smilingly hospitable "After you!"—they affirm it is real. Their secret alliance is constantly referred to using the language of race terror—being discovered by the upper management of each as "fraternizing," and "consorting with the enemy." For both, this fear is compounded by becoming too much involved with the alternative "Other" that is humanity, an engagement vilified by angels and demons alike as "going native," or being "not one of us anymore." To be sure, Aziraphale is reluctant to shed the vestiges of dazzling angelic privilege, and clings to it even as his loyalty is challenged by the angelic hosts: "Of course you can trust me, I'm an angel," he bluffs to Gabriel. His privilege is also laced with cowardice: faced with the possibility of a real Apocalypse that they cannot stop, Aziraphale begs Crowley to dispatch the AntiChrist so that "Heaven has no blood on his hands," a proposal the demon angrily rejects as "doing Heaven's dirty work." For his part, throughout his association with humanity and Aziraphale, Crowley shows the tell-tale elements of despair, self-blaming, and self-loathing of those who suffer racial prejudice in a society of white privilege (see hooks 9-20). Refusing to adhere to the label of being "evil"—"I didn't fall, I sauntered downwards," he protests—Crowley overcompensates, at every turn performing actions which demonstrate at least to viewers that he is more merciful than the smug Archangels in their aseptic heaven. Rejected by Aziraphale after one of their frequent quarrels for being the "fallen angel" that he is, Crowley drowns himself in drink, casts about for a way to escape not merely the earth but the galaxy, and finally seeks his ultimate exit—while engaged in extremely risky contact with humans—via a "suicide pill" of holy

water. And besides the racially charged rhetoric describing the pair in the series, one notes overtones of the homoerotic; the duo's ages-old relationship, built of lingering glances, gestures, and carefully chosen words, is infused with deferred desire. "You go too fast for me, Crowley," Aziraphale tearfully confesses, linking both the breakneck speed at which the demon drives his muscle car and the rapid pace (despite the comic irony of it dragging over millennia) of their burgeoning romance. At one point Aziraphale's engagement with Crowley is even mocked by the angelic host who has discovered it: "Don't think your boyfriend can help you—he's in trouble too," they jeer. The pair's disagreements-cum-lovers' spats—"It's over. I don't like you!" Aziraphale blubbers, while Crowley cajoles beguilingly "You do!"—are so romantically stereotypical that, after Crowley has dropped Aziraphale off on a street corner in a huff, a gentleman passer-by nods sagely at the angel and says consolingly, "I've been there. You're better off without him."

Angel and demon do make up, of course, continuing the partnership that should not have been in attempting to save the world. Curiously, however, the pair's role in sparing the earth from its annihilation via the Apocalypse is relatively minor. Humans being erring creatures, the End of the World, which the pair has lamented for millennia, was actually botched at its inception; the AntiChrist was misplaced just after Crowley, doing his job, handed him over to an order of Satanic nuns. Later, Aziraphale and Crowley, having resolved (as part of their business arrangement) to thwart the destruction of the world, track down who they believe is the AntiChrist and attempt to nurture him into decency. When they discover the truth about the infant mix-up, the chase for the real AntiChrist is on. And if race is the latent subject behind the obstacles to their friendship, a race is most assuredly the *modus operandi* of their work together: the countdown to the world's end looms heavily and figures prominently in the series. As the duo rushes to prevent the child-AntiChrist from unleashing nuclear Armageddon, Aziraphale is accidentally "discorporated" and must come back as a ghost, possessing (in a marvellous bit of comedy as well as a nod to gender fluidity) the body of tender-hearted fake medium and occasional sex worker Madame Tracey. At the last second, the prophesying witch's descendant's partner shuts down the nuclear arsenal; and the AntiChrist, having lost his friends by his imperiousness, takes it upon himself to reject and shed his supernatural powers and disperse the Four

Horsemen summoned to ensure the world's destruction. The only disruption Aziraphale and Crowley bring to the mix is their pointed question to the would-be destroyers whether the "Divine Plan" to be followed is the same as "God's Ineffable Plan." There is no clear answer, and both heavenly and hellish bureaucracies are chagrined to discover that their cherished Apocalypse has in fact long hinged on—and ends up being finally dismissed by—a technicality.

But all is not yet saved. Though the young AntiChrist has mercifully re-embodied ghostly Aziraphale, angel and demon are only too aware that their own gig is up, their forbidden relationship exposed, and that "Heaven and Hell will have their war." But what they do about it is what proves of true importance to the series. As the Apocalypse recedes from its realization, an ancient prophecy of the witch blows by chance (or is it?) into Aziraphale's hand, one that reads "choose your faces carefully." The two disperse, knowing that they must face the consequences of their illicit friendship. Just before Aziraphale and Crowley are summoned upward and downward for a reckoning, however, they take the witch's prediction literally and act on it, exchanging spirits between bodies as they sit on a bench at a bus stop. And it is this celestial/infernal racial mixing—a kind of spirit miscegenation—that truly shakes the foundation of the Divine Order. Tried and put to torture by the tools of the supernatural trade—holy water and hellfire respectively—Crowley and Aziraphale prove seemingly impervious to their torments. Their would-be torturers in Heaven and Hell are stupefied, enraged, but ultimately stymied. Angelic and demonic hosts alike see their power destabilized, howsoever briefly, and the serene or grim confidence they had invested in the Great Plan falters, if only for a moment. The pair goes free, and they are able to swap their spirits back into their former human incorporations.

Wearing the face of the other, angel and demon discover, is an acutely effective way of stepping into the Other's shoes, seeing from another's perspective. And because of this trading of faces, this exchange of appearances, the two no longer thwart and cancel each other and their work out. Instead, they literally rescue each other. Though they have been taught to see each other as on opposing sides, angelic and demonic, both come to recognize the truth of Crowley's passionate observation "We are on our own side!" It is as if the words of Gayatri Spivak had been brought to being in full measure: "What we are asking for is that the hegemonic discourses, and the holders of hegemonic

discourse, should dehegemonize their position and themselves learn how to occupy the subject position of the other" (Spivak, quoted in hooks 177). And this exchange with the Other, the essence of compassion, creates an irrevocable change. The two intended enemies need not, cannot go back to business as usual, for the death grip of the fear of the Other has been broken forever. The strange trajectory of their relationship has proven one of the "new paths that contradict the core values that systems of privilege depend on" (Johnson 149). Fittingly, the series ends with the pair's long-promised idyllic lunch at the Ritz, a scene accompanied by the lilting song "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square," evoking the budding hope and promise of two lovers meeting. The same-sex couple's lingering moment together at the series' conclusion is both pregnant with romantic possibility and tender to its core, as they face each other and make a toast "to the world." For they may indeed have saved it.

In her essay "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," activist scholar Audre Lorde asks what it means "when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy?" and concludes that "only the most narrow perimeters of change are possible…" (98). But with *Good Omens* at least, it is a start. It becomes clear from this rom-com romp of a fantasy series that it is the bureaucratic overstructure of domination set in place (with or without a deity) and left unexamined, one that uses beings as "tools of that glorious destiny" that is truly of evil. It is through using the system's embedded tools against it—the beliefs supporting hellfire and holy water—that angel and demon undermine, even for a moment, this celestial and infernal structure; that the system is discovered as faulty; that the chains of a few are broken. What it portends back on earth is of even greater significance: it means humans too can recognize oppressive systems, choose alternatives, and pursue other paths. And if humanity truly has a "fatal flaw," it would seem to be in its continued subjugation to an undergirding system that separates and labels and punishes those who stray from its rigid boundaries. *Good Omens* does not pull punches: as the pair sits on the bench after their corporeal re-transference, Crowley posits to a dismayed Aziraphale that this Apocalypse may be only the prelude to an even more devastating confrontation, one between Heaven and Hell and all of humanity. This could imply that one course envisioned for humankind is its continuing adherence to this system of Othering, and finding no way beyond it but destruction. Yet this

horror is not the final image we are left with as the series ends. Rather, we see love lighting up the faces of two who were never meant to be friends, but became them anyway. By showing viewers that there is reason to hope, that even supernatural enemies can choose to take on, if briefly, the face of The Other, *Good Omens* points to a better way forward for mere humanity.

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The Monsters among Us, or Decentring Whiteness in Contemporary American Visual Culture: Jordan Peele's *Get Out*

Loredana BERCUCI

1. Introduction

The frenzy surrounding the 2016 elections in the United States prompted discussions about disadvantaged communities of poor whites whose problems had been ignored by political discourse until that point. Arguably, it was this community to whom Hillary Clinton was referring when calling Trump's supporters a "basket of deplorables." Since 2016, whiteness, as an identity, has been cropping up more and more in this manner, namely as the focus of both the news media and cultural products, i.e. in American visual culture in general. In the news (as well as in its pop culture counter-part, political late-night comedy), events such as the Charlottesville protests re-centred whiteness as an identity. In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder and the unrest that followed, certain groups, like the Proud Boys and various white militias, as well as the participants in the 2021 storming of the United States Capitol, appeared in political discourse and, consequently, in the news, as representatives of whiteness. The meaning of whiteness is currently being more intensely interrogated in various cultural spaces. In visual culture, whiteness may have most famously been the focus of Jordan Peele's iconic *Get Out* (2017). The portrayal of various white types and stereotypes in the movie is largely negative, with such features as hypocrisy, cruelty, indifference, fragility, aggression coming to the fore. In this paper, I analyse the monstrous qualities of white identities as they are depicted in *Get Out* (2017), arguing that the movie subverts (movie) tropes that have historically worked to uphold white privilege by

making whiteness visible. Before proceeding with the analysis proper, I will offer a theoretical foray into the framework of the current study.

2. On critically engaging with whiteness

The movie *Get Out* will be approached from the perspective of Critical Whiteness Studies. As part of Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies is a relatively recent field, dating back to the 1990s**.** While Critical Whiteness Studies has only recently been crafted as a discipline, many works written by African-American writers have offered illuminating critiques of whiteness and the field is based on them.

As early as 1920, W.E.B Du Bois stated, in his essay "The Soul of White Folk," that "[t]he discovery of a personal whiteness among the world's peoples is a very modern thing - a nineteenth and twentieth century matter, indeed" (923). He goes on to argue that "whiteness is ownership of the Earth forever and ever" (924), suggesting that whiteness is most clearly defined by its privileged position in terms of property ownership and not by other markers. Du Bois speaks of a 'double consciousness,' i.e. the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" ("The Soul of Black Folk"), which endows African Americans with privileged knowledge about the psychology of whites – a state caused by always being the focus of the white gaze. In this respect, Du Bois, who seems to see whiteness as a problem, echoes Frederick Douglass, who had insisted before Du Bois that focusing on the "Negro problem" was misguided and pleaded instead for laying stress on the "white problem" (qtd. in Roediger 75). While the politics of analysing whiteness raises issues of re-entering a hegemonic notion, authors, such as Du Bois and Douglass, point to the necessity of doing in order to expose power structures inherent in whiteness.

Another famous African-American author who tackled whiteness was James Baldwin. He wrote *Giovanni's Room* (1956), one of the few enduring novels authored by a person of colour in the twentieth century and featuring a white protagonist. He also theorised whiteness frequently in his essays. In his essay, "On Being 'White' … and Other Lies" (1984), Baldwin notes that "America became white - the people who, as they claim, 'settled' the country became white - because

of the necessity of denying the Black presence, and justifying the Black subjugation" (178). He argues that whiteness emerged out of a desire to assert power by subjugating black bodies. Toni Morrison later took up this idea that American culture, especially American literature, was built in opposition to blackness because in the "construction of blackness and enslavement could be found not only the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin colour, the projection of the not-me" (82). On the other hand, bell hooks notes that in another essay ("Stranger in the Village"), Baldwin seems to suggest that "whiteness exists without knowledge of blackness even as it collectively asserts control" (339). In other words, while whiteness may have been born in opposition to non-whiteness, it paradoxically does not require the physical presence of non-whiteness to dominate.

In fact, when talking about the slave-master relationship, bell hooks shows that the hegemonic position of the whites benefits from the invisibility of black subjectivity: "[t]o look directly was an assertion of subjectivity, equality. Safety resided in the pretence of invisibility" (340). At the same time, hooks argues that whiteness imagines it is invisible "since the power [whites] have historically asserted, and even now collectively assert over black people accorded them the right to control the black gaze" (340). In denying the right to the gaze, i.e. to look at whiteness critically, non-whites are robbed of their positions as subjects. This translates into the whites' lack of awareness of the white presence in non-white life and discourse, whereas in reality it often appears as terror. See hooks' statement: "whiteness in the black imagination is often a representation of terror" (hooks 342).

Recent work in Critical Whiteness Studies takes up these ideas. Thus, more recently whiteness has been theorised in relation to the idea of invisibility in line with bell hooks' argument. It has also been further associated with ownership and property, or more generally with power, as Du Bois had suggested. Echoing Baldwin and Morrison, scholars in the field have also shown how whiteness conceptually feeds off non-white presence. Finally, whiteness is defined by terror, as bell hooks has argued. All of these valences of whiteness gave rise to any number of related motifs and issues, such as the role of stereotyping, symbolism relating to whiteness, or particularities of embodiment.

This invisibility of whiteness allows it to give the impression of being the norm. Audre Lorde, for instance, referred to white identity as the "mythical norm" (116) and suggested that it is a false universality. In other words, whiteness, from this perspective, is way of knowing the world that pretends to be universal, and that remains unnamed and unrecognised (Watson 5). This has allowed for the representation of white individuals as simply unique humans while non-white persons are often understood to be, first and foremost, representatives of their race. Consequently, the invisibility of whiteness gives the illusion of "infinite variety" (Dyer 13) and complexity. Paradoxically, "[w]hites must be seen to be white, yet whiteness as race resides in invisible properties and whiteness as power is maintained by being unseen" (Dyer 45). As such, the aim of Critical Whiteness Studies is to show that whiteness is not the norm, but an identity among many, dislodging its status as a set of universals.

Whiteness in American culture is also connected to property. As Cheryl Harris has famously argued "[t]he origins of property rights in the United States are rooted in racial domination" (1716), actuated in the conquest of territory, in the appropriation of black labour as well as in the treatment of black bodies as property. David Roediger points out that there is consensus within the field of Critical Whiteness Studies that "white identity is decisively shaped by the exercise of power and expectation in advantages when acquiring property" (81). Whiteness has historically justified its claim to property and domination by invoking its differences in relation to non-whites. As Sherrow Pinder argues, "[w]hiteness is a dialectical force, which requires the non-white presence in order to maintain its malignant existence" (7). For that reason, the "white discourse implacably reduces the non-white subject to being a function of the white subject, not allowing her/him space or autonomy" (Dyer 13).

Finally, domination through terror reveals not only "the complicity of racial terror with reason" (Gilroy 73), but more broadly with whiteness, the hallmark of modern imperialism. Terror or the witnessing of terror is associated with whiteness in experiences and representations "from slave patrols to lynchings to mass incarceration" (Roediger 82). A regime of terror is imposed not only through physical violence, but through discursive **denigration: the** stereotyping of non-whites, the portrayal of whiteness as lack

of embodiment, and the symbolic depiction of whiteness as a good/pure work *together* to uphold white supremacy.

Whereas the specificity of whiteness "does not reside in a set of stereotypes so much as in narrative structural positions, rhetorical tropes and habits of perception" (Dryer 11), the stereotyping of non-whites is frequently used to subjugate them. Furthermore, non-white stereotypes are typically constructed as the negative side of dichotomies in which whiteness is seen as the positive, such as good/bad, light/darkness, purity/impurity, spiritual/ physical. As a result of this, whiteness is not seen as embodied, and, consequently, race as physicality is more often than not attributed to non-whites. Richard Dyer explains this by Christianity, where the spirit is split from the body (see 15-18), so that "true whiteness resides in the noncorporeal" (45). In what follows, I will analyse how such strategies of whiteness are approached in *Get Out* with a view to destabilising whiteness.

3. Destabilising whiteness in *Get Out*

Get Out (2017) tells the story of photographer Chris Washington, who takes a trip to meet the family of his white girlfriend, Rose Armitage. At the Armitage house, in rural Upstate New York, Rose's brother, Jeremy, and their parents, neurosurgeon Dean and psychiatrist Missy, make comments about race that get progressively more alarming. Chris witnesses some incredibly strange behaviour from the estate's black housekeeper Georgina and the groundskeeper Walter, as well. While the movie begins like a family drama in which we expect to find out more about some parents who first reject, then eventually accept their daughter's new boyfriend after some transformative encounter, it quickly takes a completely different turn. Thus, *Get Out* uses this juxtaposition of genres to downgrade characters who begin simply as being unlikeable but soon turn into the monsters in a horror movie. However, they are not typical horror flick monsters, they represent a certain kind of monstrosity, namely white monstrosity. What is more, the nuances of this kind of monstrosity are brought to the fore with the use of several types of characters, which ultimately amount stereotypes of whiteness used to expose it. Ultimately, the play on genre in the movie allows for the depiction of whiteness as terrorising, an effect achieved through mind control, the

separation of the mind from the body, as well as through ownership and control of the black body and black culture.

Get Out creates several character types of whiteness in order to expose whiteness as specific, i.e. non-universal. Perhaps the patriarchs are the most prominent category of whiteness in the movie. Embodied by Dean Armitage and his father, Roman Armitage, they are defined by eugenics and scientific racism, cultural and physical appropriation, and a God complex. The grandfather of the family, appearing in the movie as Walter, the black groundskeeper of the Armitage estate, spent his life obsessing about the time Jesse Owens defeated him in the 1936 Olympics. In the process, he found a scientific method through which white consciousness could be transferred into the body of African Americans, essentially attempting to colonise and enslave their bodies for what he saw as their superior physical attributes. His life's work was then continued by his son, a neurosurgeon, and his grandson, who is about to become a neurosurgeon.

Depicting this split between the mind and the body, the movies shows whiteness' claims to lack of corporeality. The patriarchs of the family believe that they cannot be contained by the body, and that their identity resides in the mind, or the spirit. This belief is connected to their God complex, which allows them to see whiteness as divine, as is obvious from Dead Armitage's speech towards the end of the movie: "Even the sun will die someday. But we are divine. We are the gods trapped in cocoons." By this logic, they need to escape the white body and need the black body whose "natural gifts" may reach their full potential with the help of white "determination," as Roman Armitage explains.

The movie exposes the fault in this logic in two ways: by showing its effects on black individuals and by showing that the talents of the enslaved do not reside in the body. In the scene where Chris, the movie's protagonist, watches a video featuring Roman Armitage, who explains the process of "coagula" (transferring white consciousness into black bodies), he frames it as a collaborative effort: "we could both be part of something greater, something perfect." Furthermore, he tells Chris that he is about to become part of the "family." Reminiscent of racist arguments which claimed that slaves were treated as family members on plantations and benefited from their position, Roman's speech fails to point out that this process would destroy Chris and

relegate his own consciousness to the "Sunken Place," a subconscious darkness from where he would watch the world as a spectator, with no control over his body. In other words, [f]aced with this assault on their essential humanity," Chris would struggle "to find authentic identity and expression" (Nichols 232). This process mirrors the way in which bell hooks describes invisibility. Not having access to their own subjectivity, people of colour are rendered invisible in spite of being physically present.

Roman and Dean Armitage's claim that, by placing white consciousness in a black body, whites would have access to the talents that non-whites "naturally" – and, as it is also hinted, "unfairly," possess and they would be able to enhance them. These claims are shown to be faulty as it is made obvious that the talents of the black characters in the movie do not reside exclusively in their bodies. After Roman's consciousness is transferred into the body of Walter, he is still not able to beat Jesse Owens' record. This shows that the talent of Jesse Owens did not boil down to genetics but to the athlete himself as a whole and uniquely talented individual. Similarly, Chris' talent as a photographer cannot be harnessed by (literally) appropriating his eyes. Thus, the movie enacts a critique of scientific racism based on the dichotomy mind/body, where the whites symbolise the mind and the non-whites the body.

While the patriarchs of the Armitage family do not manage to rob those they abduct of their talents, they do tap into immortality by possessing their bodies. By using black bodies as hosts for white consciousness, the patriarch type symbolises how whiteness achieves god-like supremacy by turning black bodies into property. The black body is turned into an object that can be owned and put to use while the consciousness of those meant to inhabit that body is put on hold in a manner mirroring slavery. As such, the movie exposes how whiteness gets and maintains power through ownership of black bodies, both literal (turning black bodies into instruments of free labour) and figurative (denying non-whites subjectivity).

The theft of black bodies is paralleled by the Armitages' proclivity for collecting objects from othered cultures: the Armitage house is like a museum in which artefacts from different cultures are exhibited. The connection between the body and the artefact is made clear as Chris is body is auctioned by the Armitages' friend exactly as one would auction a work of art. This of course echoes decolonial critiques of Western white archivist tendencies,

which, to use Derrida's terms, serves the function of preserving but "in an unnatural fashion, that is to say in making laws (nomos) or in making people respect the law" (7). At the same time, the connection is made between the auctioning of objects and the auctioning of bodies as part of the transatlantic slave trade.

The second category of whiteness showcased in the movie is that of the white manipulators. Whereas the patriarchs believe in their own skewed version of the world, the manipulators are aware of what they do and of the psychology of the others around them. Importantly, these characters, namely Missy and Rose Armitage, are women, who represent white femininity in the movie. As a psychiatrist, Missy Armitage, the matriarch of the family, has turned manipulation into a science, developing her own method of hypnosis. Whereas Roman and Dean handle the body of the abductee, she is the one who entraps the mind in the "Sunken Place." The patriarchs' obsession with the physical, which they admire and want to enhance, suggests that they regard black individuals as mentally and spiritually underdeveloped. Missy, on the other hand, is aware of the complexity of Chris' s mind, she knows how to tap into his guilt regarding the death of his mother.

Missy Armitage's lack of empathy for a human being in spite of her knowledge of their character and psychology raises the question of her motives for acting as an enabler of the patriarchs. Besides the obvious reason – she will eventually also be awarded immortality – it would seem that this is her way of achieving power in a male-dominated family and society. In the beginning, she seems demure, warm, and calm, adhering to ideals of white womanhood, but by the end of the movie it becomes clear that she asserts control over her family as a result of her ability to control black minds. This is especially apparent in the scene where, after she causes Chris to fall to the ground, she orders her husband and her son to carry him. The tone of her order makes it clear that she has authority in the family, and it is her complicity that awards it to her. Thus, she appears to be paid what Du Bois called a "public and psychological wage" (*Black Reconstruction* 701) for her complicity, i.e. her motives stem from lack of power in a system which favours identity categorisation and the pitting of one group against another, especially disempowered whites against non-whites.

Unlike the working class whites to whom Du Bois referred, Missy is an upper class white woman, and her strategies are specific for that identity. Like

her husband and his father, Missy manipulates wealth to achieve domination. This is symbolised by the tea cup and silver spoon she uses as instruments to control Chris. The teacup and the tea can be read as sym**bols** of imperial domination and pillaging, while the silver spoon hints at mining and land exploitation, often coupled with race-based genocide in the Americas. Additionally, Missy sets white femininity against male blackness: interrogating Chris about whether he smoked in front of her daughter, she implies that he harms Rose in some manner. Thus, Missy discursively places Chris in the role of the perpetrator, creating a stereotypical image of vulnerable white femininity, or as Vron Ware puts it the image of the "vulnerable white woman and her fantasy of the aggressive black man."

Like her mother, Rose Armitage is a master manipulator, but of a different kind. Part of the millennial generation, she masterfully performs 'wokeness,' i.e. a type of awareness of race relations in concert being an ally of the oppressed. While her mother uses academic knowledge to manipulate, Rose uses her experience as a member of her generation. Unlike others in her milieu, she is aware of the subtle micro-aggressions associated with the covert racism of the liberal elites. In the opening scene, for instance, she jokes about her father's *faux pas* when he says he would have voted for Obama a third time. She is also aware of the systemic issues African-Americans face in the United States. For example, when the police racially profiles Chris, she stands up for him.

Placing herself in the role of white female victimhood, Rose feigns fragility to get her way. She frequently pretends she is hurt and uses tears to make the others do her bidding. During the party her family throws as a cover for the auction in which Chris' body would be sold, Rose describes herself as a co-victim to Chris. She acts as though the interactions with the guests are as difficult for her as they are for Chris. When the two become separated at the party, Rose reproaches Chris: "What the fuck? You left me out there." She thus places herself in the role of the victim and Chris in the role of the perpetrator, or at the very least a failed protector. When Rod, Chris' friend, calls to check up on him and attempts to record Rose as evidence for abduction, she pretends he sexually harasses her. In the penultimate scene, after Chris escapes and kills most of the Armitages, Rose chases him with a rifle. Finally managing to defeat her, he attempts to strangle her when they both hear police sirens in the background.

This sound makes Rose smile, which shows that she knows that if the police were to see Chris kneeling over a dying white woman, he would immediately be incarcerated.

Regarding Rose's motivation, unlike her mother, she does not appear to be gaining any power for her complicity with the patriarchs. However, in the video where Roman Armitage explains the consciousness transference procedure, we see Rose as a toddler, which implies that she had grown up with that ideology all her life. This is shown visually in an iconic scene as she eats coloured cereal and milk separately, which suggests her proclivity for categorisation (white vs. coloured) and separation, presumably learned from her family. Interestingly, like her father, Rose is also a collector. This is evident in her "gallery" of conquests – all the pictures of men she has managed to seduce in order to be sold by her family are posted above her bed. This could also suggest that the whole process is a kind of sport to her as she collects trophies of her achievements. Rose seems completely immersed in the ideology of her family who understand whiteness as superior and treat subjugation with absolute indifference. Ryan-Bryant argues that *Get Out* follows a rhetoric of lynching as it "resonates with one of the most chilling dimensions of lynching history: spectators' frequent tendency to harvest parts from the dead" (108).

Jeremy Armitage, the youngest member of the Armitage clan, represents a facet of white masculinity different from that of the patriarch. Rather than entertaining lofty ideas about perfecting humanity through the eugenics of the body, like his father and his grandfather, he is more concerned with an animalistic way of asserting his domination. In most scenes, he is shown to be obsessed with proving his masculinity, especially by his sexual conquests and by trying to engage in physical confrontations so as to prove his prowess. While the others assert their power through intellectual strategies, he uses blunt force. Jeremy is, in fact, the first of the Armitages that the audience meets: before the credits, in a vignette, Andre, another victim of the Armitages, is shown walking through a white suburb when a car starts pursuing him. After some trailing meant to instil terror, he is tackled by a helmeted assailant, whom we later realise to be Jeremy. Elizabeth A. Patton (2019) notes that this scene, as well as all other violent scenes in the movie, happens at night, making the space in the movie the equivalent of a sundown town. This vignette foreshadows the action of the movie. It reveals the brutality of the abduction as the violent rendering of the

unconscious possession of the black bodies. The other characters' more calculated acts hide this violence by appealing to stereotypes and rationality.

Apart from the Armitage family, we also get a glimpse into their social network, that is to say the white upper classes who use their wealth to assert their domination by literally buying black bodies. They are pretentious collectors of items they do not understand. They also have a very narrow idea of what aesthetic value is, all the while being obsessed with the physical, especially that of their own aging bodies. The cop who appears at the beginning of the movie, of course, has the role of upholding the supremacy of this society by policing who is allowed in that space.

Perhaps the most interesting white character in *Get Out* is Jim Hudson. He is a blind art dealer, which is meant to symbolise his colour blindness. Unlike the others, he claims to appreciate Chris for his photography skills. Hence he wants to inhabit his body in order to steal his "eye," i.e. his talent. In spite of his claims to colour-blindness, he concentrates on the body instead of the intellect as a centre for talent. Like the others, he is a collector who plunders other individuals and societies for their artworks. Portraying Hudson as the least racist in this social circle plays an important role. While the Armitage family is made up of types representing more obvious racism, Hudson represents a neoliberal, seemingly post-racial society, which claims not to be racist, but which is revealed to have in-built systemic racism. In the end, it is he who successfully purchases Chris' body, becoming the most criminal of all. Hudson wants Chris' body for something other than his race, but ultimately, like the others, he ends up enacting violence on a black body on the assumption that the talent of non-whites resides in the physical.

Get Out offers types of whiteness: the patriarch, the manipulator, the "woke" white girl, the aging rich person afraid to lose power, the colour blind liberal elite. Even the names of the characters suggest these types: Dean is the head of the institution, Roman is the imperialist of old, Rose implies frailty and deceptive beauty, and so on. As I have explained above, whiteness usually conceals itself as universal – white characters are seen as unique individuals, whiteness is not stereotyped. In contrast to the white characters, the black characters are well rounded and complex individuals with whom the audience sympathises. Chris, for instance, is a talented photographer and a trauma survivor who wrestles with guilt. He is assertive as well as diplomatic when it

comes to racism, being able to read with precision what the situation requires. When he is rendered invisible by being relegated to the "Sunken Place," a metaphor for marginalisation and suppression in the movie, the audience feels for him. Alison Landsberg argues that *Get Out* renders "newly visible the very real but often masked racial landscape of a professedly liberal post-racial America" (5). I would go even further and argue that, in crafting these stereotypes of whiteness, the movie renders *whiteness* visible as an ideology, thus decentring it.

Whiteness is rendered visible through visual means as well. As such, *Get Out* is ripe with symbols of whiteness. For instance, the Armitage estate, and especially the house resembles a plantation. This idea is reinforced in the racial distribution of the residents: the Armitage family is white, whereas their servants are black. Throughout the movie, Jeremy wields a lacrosse stick, a game appropriated by white settlers from the Native Americans. However, the most interesting way in which whiteness is made visible on the visual level is by assigning it another colour. As Richard Dyer argued, whiteness is "not thought of as a hue at all" (46), so it is easily made invisible. In *Get Out*, whiteness is assigned the colour red: the Armitage family and all their guests wear red. This makes them visible at once and carries different connotations: violence, murder, blood. Most strikingly, Rose wears a shirt that is white with red stripes, with red seeming to stain the purity of the white, suggesting the corruption of whiteness through racial violence. At the same time, when Rose stands next to Chris, who is wearing a blue shirt, their juxtaposition creates the image of the American flag. The conflict between white and non-white becomes the core of American identity, which, like the image of this perfect couple, hides a violent conflict.

Whiteness is also frequently conflated with light (see Dyer 47). The movie foregrounds this through numerous references to visual media which use light to create images. For instance, Chris is a photographer. Like Peele, he uses light (whiteness) to capture images of abuse. Flashes of light can be used to bring abducted individuals back to consciousness, temporarily disabling the colonisers. Dean Armitage stands in front of the fireplace, comparing the light of fire to his own life. Once he is incapacitated, Chris wakes up in front of a television, on whose screen Roman Armitage appears making reference to the

sunlight. The use of the television suggests the ability of light to mediate representations of whiteness or to conceal it. As the audience watches Chris watching the television, issue of spectatorship and complicity are brought to the fore. The audience becomes Chris during his childhood when he waited, stunned, in front of the television instead of calling for help for his mother, who consequently died in a hit-and-run.

4. Conclusions

Ultimately, these ways of exposing whiteness work to expose it as terror. By sympathising with Chris, the audience realises the aggression he faces: from daily racism and envy to invisibility to being objectified and enslaved. Peele uses generic conventions of the horror movie to turn the tropes associated with monstrosity into vehicles for social critique. As in any horror movie, the violence escalates until the monster is finally revealed to be whiteness in a system in which racism is entrenched.

Get Out's popularity, due no doubt to its focus on the monstrosity associated with whiteness. The movie signals a moment of transformation in American culture which is similarly approached in a large number of other American cultural products focusing on whiteness in recent times (e.g. the TV series *Lovecraft Country*). In his study, *Not Quite White* (2006), Matt Wray shows that American discourse has focused on whiteness, especially the poor whites, in times of deep social crisis, when race was being redefined, including in the 1830s and 1840s when abolitionists claimed that the poor whites in the South were the victims of the immoral slave economy. It remains to be seen what the re-emerging focus on whiteness means. For its part, *Get Out* (2017) offers a catalogue of types of whiteness and racist ideas in contemporary society, which it allegorises through stereotypical characters. Coupled with visual metaphors and the modification of horror movie tropes, these make whiteness discursively visual, thus exposing it as an identity among many. Such visual products perform an important function of enacting frequent arguments and reactions related to race in American culture.

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Multiculturalism and Religion: Between East and West

Tarek MUSLEH

In the past religion played a major role in the life of people to the extent that it even interpreted natural phenomena as either reward or punishment. It also infiltrated all aspects of life in order to pass rigid ethical judgments on what was right and wrong and has legislated almost everything accordingly. Whether consciously or not, men of religion throughout history were promoting a particular system to serve the people in power both economically and politically. There is often an implicit alliance between politicians, business people, and men of religion who often conspire against the majority of people who happened to be poor. As humans were developing and experimenting on every aspect of life they discovered that there was a wide gap between the practical side of life they were experiencing and religion to the extent that many people tried to throw doubts on the reality of religion. The scientific discoveries in particular widened the gap further between religion and the intelligentsia and many people felt disillusioned with the traditional way of life which was often reinforced by religion.

In the West, the history of Christianity witnessed many wars such as the Crusades and most people were fully convinced of the final truth of their faith. The English poet John Dryden could be considered a typical believer in Christianity which, at least, from his viewpoint triumphed over the power of reason. See Dryden's statement in "Religio Laici".

> So pale grows reason at religion's sight
> And so dies, so dissolves in a supernatural light.

However, during the Victorian period, biology, geology, and astronomy, in particular, provided scientific facts which challenged the traditional narration of the Bible to the extent that many people lost their faith and

embraced Agnosticism. This philosophical trend means that one can neither believe in God, nor deny his existence. Agnosticism simply states there is no evidence to support either claim and perhaps encourages secularism by ignoring the whole question of divinity. Some scholars adopted a metaphorical interpretation of the Bible and concentrated on the moral behaviour of the Christians rather than on miracles or rituals. This movement tried further to modernize every aspect of Christianity and devised a special kind of ethical values that often did not contradict individualism. Sexual life including sexual orientation became relaxed and most people felt free to lead the type of individual life they liked without feeling guilty or sinful.

Ideally, all religions should have a mechanism to develop and respond to changes that are called for by the practical side of life. At one time, Jesus was confronted by the Jews who protested that his disciples were not observing the Sabbath. The answer of Jesus was, "The Sabbath was made for humans, not humans for the Sabbath" (Mark 2: 27). This implies that religion is there to help humans sort out their lives in the best way but as soon as a religious principle becomes an obstacle it should be either modified or even changed accordingly. Of course, a more practical position is to question the validity of every principle in life whether religious or not based on how logical and practical that principle is. To kill people who work on the Sabbath is an unjustifiable crime, and one should deny the whole logic that the Sabbath is intrinsically a sacred day and working on that day is a kind of violation of solid rules. One might also question the wisdom of a god who would legislate something like killing which is a disproportionate judgment with the so-called crime. Unfortunately, the vast majority of believers do not have that courage and they are manipulated and systematically brainwashed to believe artificially that it's intrinsically wrong to work on the Sabbath without any justification since the source of legislation is a religion that is supposed to be infallible.

Among other things, multiculturalism promotes the idea that we have to accept the otherness of others without qualification or any consideration that may separate one human being from another. However, the actual reality is that most religions openly negate the identity of others and many tenets from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam promote hatred, violence, and condemn other faiths as well as the non-believers. In the Old Testament, for example, there are horrific pictures of unjustifiable violence and striking examples of violating human rights as we understand them today especially against the non-Jews.

This illustrates the worst kind of vengeance, racism, and even sadism against others. God's chosen people are ordered systematically to kill men, women, children, and even babies brutally. The following judgment is passed against the Babylon and the Babylonians,

> Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction,
> happy is the one who repays you
> according to what you have done to us.
> Happy is the one who seizes your infants
> and dashes them against the rocks.
>
> (Psalms: 137: 8-9).

Another more shocking example is when Samuel who speaks on behalf of God commands Saul, "Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Samuel 15:3). Saul does not fully apply this order, which makes God and Samuel angry. Similarly, Moses orders his army leaders after defeating the Midianites, "Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man" (Numbers 31:17-18). The plunder includes humans, animals, in addition to thirty-two thousand virgins (I Samuel 32:40) who were presumably raped later and enslaved for life. Christians believe that the New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament and both are traditionally published together as one Bible. Christians often cite Jesus when he said that he came "not to abolish but to fulfil Jewish law" (Matthew 5: 17). In other words, every Christian has to follow suit and embrace all the principles of the Old Testament.

Unfortunately, Christianity itself shows the same kind of violence and one wonders about the logic of such cruelty even against Christians. This attitude promotes guilt and may systematically lead one even to detest human nature. Jesus says that "if your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away… And if your right hand causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away" (Matthew 5: 29-30). Almost systematically one gets the impression that Jesus does not accept human nature as it[1] is. The Bible crystallizes the idea that most people will go to hell (Matthew 7:13-14).

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[1] Jesus says that "anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery" (Matthew 5:28).

Jesus also demanded his followers powerfully to love him more than parents and children (Matthew 12:37-38) which can only be realized artificially and which is rather a sign of his immaturity and excessive egoism. All these threats make Christians feel a strong sense of guilt and get extremely worried all the time whether they can achieve this highly demanding "ideal".

Ironically, most representatives of any one religion do not accept other religions and that's why the Jews tried Jesus, humiliated him in the worst possible way, and eventually caused his crucifixion. By the same token, Jesus was almost systematically critical of the Jews' behaviour and stigmatized the Jews by all sorts of names. "The children of the kingdom [the Jews] shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12). Jesus' anger is particularly directed against those who ignore him, do not convert and follow him despite his so-called miracles. He condemns entire cities to dreadful deaths and the eternal torment of hell because they didn't care for his preaching (Matthew 11:20-24)[2]. Furthermore, the cities that neither "receive" the disciples nor "hear" their words will be destroyed by God. It will be worse for them than for Sodom and Gomorrah. (Matthew 10:14-15)[3]. Jesus also says that he has come to destroy families by making family members hate each other. He has "come not to send peace, but a sword"(Matthew 10:34-36).

Similarly, the same kind of violence and cruelty is found in *The Qur'an* despite Muslim apologetics' incessant attempts to restrict the meaning of those verses to occasion and circumstances:

> When the (four) forbidden months are over, wherever you encounter the idolaters, kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every lookout post; but if they turn (to God), maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way, for God is most forgiving and merciful ("Repentance"[4] 9:5, p. 116).

[2] Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

[3] If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

[4] Surah (chapter) of *The Qur'an*.

Just like the Jews and the Christians who do not accept other religions, the followers of Islam practically negate both Judaism and Christianity and the *Qur'an* systematically attacks them,

> Believers, … fight those of the people of the book who do not (truly) believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and his messenger have forbidden, who do not obey the rule of justice, until they pay the tax and agree to submit. ("Repentance" 9:28-29, p. 118)

The following verse is also openly anti-Jewish and anti-Christian, "You who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies: they are allies only to each other. Anyone who takes them as an ally becomes one of them' ("The Feast"[5] 5:5, p. 73). Moreover, the Qur'an generally condemns anybody who believes in other religions, no matter what, 'If anyone seeks a religion other than (Islam) complete devotion to God, it will not be accepted from him: he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter' ("Family of 'Imran"[6] 3: 85, p. 41). Thus every Muslim must be on his guard against his enemies, 'prepare whatever you (believers) can muster, including warhorses, to frighten off God's enemies and yours…' ("Battle Gains"[7] 8-60, p. 114).

Like Jesus, Muhammad was particularly concerned to make his followers love him purely more than anybody else, even more than his followers' families. In one Hadith,[8] Muhammad was reported to have said, "None of you have faith until I am more beloved to him than his children, his father, and all of the people" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 15, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 44, according to *Daily Hadith Online*). The true Muslim has to imagine that he loves the Prophet even more than his dearest and nearest.

The fundamentalists in all religions usually insist that one should stick literally to the word of God, they advise against the corrupt interpreters who promote the idea of metaphorical and whimsical interpretations. This implies that most religions in one way or another work against what we call multiculturalism by negating the identity of others. The right answer is that religion is ideally created for humans to help them sort things out not to

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[5] The fifth surah (chapter) of the *Qur'an.*

[6] Another surah of the *Qur'an*. Saint Anne, Mary and Jesus are mentioned in this surah.

[7] Surah (chapter) of the Qur'an dedicated to the Battle of Badr that took place in 624 between Muhammad's supporters from Medina and his enemies in Mecca.

[8] Story about Muhammad.

establish hindrances in their practical way of life. A healthy religion should have a mechanism to change, develop, and be modified according to circumstances. We have to understand the spirit of the text, not the literal interpretation which is dogmatized and manipulated by ancient and rigid interpreters. War verses in all religions, for example, do not apply to us any more (we live in worlds different from the times when these religions coalesced) and we have to benefit from nowadays cultures that promote liberal humanism, diversity of opinion, and multi-culturalism.

One may stress the importance of interpreting some verses metaphorically for the sake of religion itself. The Qur'an, for example, adopted two styles: the metaphorical style and the principle of addressing people in the language they can understand. For example, in the Surah of the Cave we find the following lines: "Then, when he came to the setting of the sun, he found it (seemed to be) setting into a muddy spring" ("The Cave" 18: 86-87, p. 189). Muslim apologetics insist that this is Dhu 'l-Karnayn, a mysterious figure who talks from his imagination and may be thinking that the sun was setting in murky spring and rising in another place. In my opinion, metaphor is the only way to interpret these verses, or the address-people-in- the-language-they-can-understand principle. Otherwise, this verse sharply contradicts science. How could anybody claim that the sun which is more than a million and three hundred thousand times the size of the earth might set in a muddy spring, literally?

If fundamentalists insist on literal interpretations of religious texts especially in the passages that instigate hatred against non-believers and promote violence, my opinion is that we should counter this rigidity by analyse the religious discourse and place it in its context. I am referring here especially to erroneous scientific information and the barbarian punishments recommended for "crimes" which are considered normal behaviour in the modern age such as homosexuality.

Both the Bible and the Qur'an refer to the creation of the universe in ways which reflect the time in which people had primitive visualizations of the way the universe was presumably created. I also think that another efficient strategy is throwing doubts on the reality of all religions which lack evidence and logic about whatever they claim. All the so-called miracles are impossible to happen and history which narrates them can never be objective or trusted. For instance,

the Old Testament has presumably twenty-seven narrators in addition to the numerous editors who added later from their imagination whatever was missing. Indeed, in the Old Testament scribes are accused of lying and falsehood, prophets and priests alike are accused of practicing deceit (Jeremiah 8:8, p. 10).[9] By the same token, the New Testament was written more than fifty years after the death of Jesus and there are wide differences among even the so-called canonical Gospels. One can question the wisdom of the Son of God for not documenting his Bible and miraculously printing it which is logically far easier than raising the dead!

Similarly, there are about forty scribes who documented the Qur'an, and there are some differences between one codex and another. That is why the third Caliph Othman who supervised the last collection of the Qur'an burnt all the other codices. Arabic orthography at the time was very confusing. They did not use dots or any diacritics to distinguish between one letter from another which resulted in misreading many verses. This situation continued for decades until the Omayyad period when some linguists added dotting and diacritics to distinguish one letter from the other and remove some of the ambiguity of reading the Qur'an.

Some historians claimed that Othman omitted some verses like the verse related to the punishment for adultery which is stoning to death for married people, among many other verses which were omitted from two chapters, "The Joint Forces" and "Repentance." If true, this sharply contradicts the verse in which God says, 'We have sent down the Qur'an Ourself, and we Ourself will guard it' ("Al-Hijr"[10] 15: 9, p. 162).

Muslims insist that it is impossible to omit even one letter from the Qur'an. One may wonder why wouldn't God who created the universe out of nothing by just saying 'let there be… and there was' not speed up the process of inventing printing to preserve his holy book. This is far easier than making Muhammad fly to heaven on a horse-like creature!

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[9] How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain.
The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?
Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

[10] Another surah (chapter) of the Qur'an.

We have to realize that our magician God has constantly been humanized with the help of human epithets which are magnified. There is no radical difference between Stalin who typifies the image of 'Big Brother Watching you,' as dramatized in *Coming up for Air* by George Orwell, and the human God imposed by most religions. Accordingly, God imposes slavery on humans and orders them to pray, fast, perform the pilgrimage, and other illogical rituals in a particular way with a view to satisfying his egoism. Ideally, we should imagine God as benevolent entity working for the welfare of humanity and He should accept human nature which He has presumably created. If we are sinful by nature, then God is, at least, partly responsible. He should be logical and consistent for he creates everything for a sound reason. In other words, everything should be visualized within the scope of a teleological world, not an aimless universe where two galaxies may accidentally collide with each other and where every living being is destined to death and annihilation without any apparent meaning. Religions concentrate on the purpose of creating humans as a kind of test and usually, this test is about believing theoretically in a particular religion without anyone single proof. Again if God is logical like a typical psychologist of behaviourism He should not punish anybody either for believing or not believing in anything. One should not forget that most people behave in a certain way as a result of their upbringing and the systematic manipulation by men of religion. Neither should He judge humans harshly based on their action which is, in most cases, the result of either intrinsic human nature or necessitated by circumstances beyond human control. Is faith in God or lack of it proportionate with the idea of either eternal hell or heaven? If a human behaviourist justifies most human action according to circumstances, isn't the greatest behaviourist of the universe expected to do the same rather than punish people arbitrarily for not believing in the prophecy of some ancient people that the vast majority of people on earth have not encountered and none has seen any real sign of their so-called prophecy. Furthermore, God himself, who is supposed to embody justice and consider all people equal, legislates patriarchy, servitude, polygamy, and even women's slavery. Subordinated women have no rights and they have to suffer permanently being "raped" by their masters without any complaint! In both Judaism and Islam polygamy and women's slavery are part of the legislation,

> if you fear that you will not deal fairly with orphan girls, you may marry whichever (other) women seem good to you, two, three, or four. If you fear that

> you cannot be equitable (to them), then marry only one, or your slave(s): that is more likely to avoid bias. (The Qur'an, "Women"[11] 4:4, p. 50)

Two criminals were crucified with Jesus. One of them protested logically, alongside most people who were watching**:** "aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" (Luke 23:39-43). He meant it was high time that the Son of God saved, at least, himself. This thief was presumably condemned to eternal damnation for throwing doubts on the reality of Jesus. The other thief who rebuked the other was rewarded with the kingdom of heaven and will be with Jesus in paradise for suddenly and naively believing in Jesus as the Son of God. Despite his shameful criminal record, the thief was forgiven immediately. As limited humans, we shouldn't inquire about the nature of God or where He came from or how He has formed himself out of nothing and developed this magic power to create two hundred billion galaxies by just saying 'let there be… and there was'. If we investigate such speculations, we are accused of blasphemy and deserve eternal damnation in hell.

All religions lack any proof of their reality of their claims. Jesus at one time was confronted by the Pharisees who demanded a sign of his claim as the Son of God, his answer was evasive and very weak, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah…" (Matthew 12:39). On another occasion, Jesus said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it" (John 2:19). But nothing happened. The crucifixion was naively interpreted as a sacrifice and the worst defeat of Jesus became his greatest triumph. Decades after the death of Jesus, his disciples tried to connect it artificially with his prediction that he was implicitly referring to his resurrection three days after of his death. Similarly, when Muhammad was trapped several times to provide any sign to the polytheists, his answer was all the time evasive using twisted logic to avoid the embarrassment of his inability to provide any sign that his prophecy comes true.

> Those who have no knowledge also say, "If only God would speak to us!" or "If only a miraculous sign would come to us!" People before them said the same things: their hearts are alike. We have made Our signs clear enough to those who have solid faith. ("Cow"[12] 1-118, p. 14)

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[11] The fourth surah (chapter) of the *Qur'an*, also called "An-Nisa." It contains many references to women.

[12] The second and the longest surah (chapter) in the *Qur'an*.

Is it a logical proof to claim that God provided a sign to the ancients without any positive response? On another occasion, Muhammad repeats the same evasive idea through his God, 'Nothing prevents Us from sending miraculous signs, except the fact that the previous peoples denied them' ("The Night Journey"[13] 17:59, pp. 178-9). Then he blames disbelievers that they are evil, 'If God had known any good in them, He would have made them hear, but even if He had, they would still have turned away, and taken no notice' ("Battle Gains"[14] 8:23, p. 111). In this way he could avoid providing any proof of his so-called prophecy by stigmatizing the other side as removed from the faculty of reasoning, "Calling to disbelievers is like a herdsman calling to things that hear nothing but a shout and a cry: they are deaf, dumb, and blind, and they understand nothing" ("Cow" 1:171, p. 19). The irony is that the Qur'an repeatedly urges people to think critically and logically, but implicitly providing they should come to the same conclusion as the believers! Is this, in reality, anywhere close to being logical?

There are more than four thousand religions in the world and most of their adherents feel confident that they're on the right track and the believers of all other religions and, on top of the list, the infidels are destined to go to hell. They also promote the idea that the reward for good human action is restricted to believers.

According to Calvinism, human action, even for Christians, is belittled to the minimum and the fate of humans is left to a process of vague predestination and election by God. Nobody has access to this sacred knowledge about their fate which is left up to a mysterious and obscure God so that humans will increase their sense of insecurity and instability. In Islam it's made abundantly clear that human action, if not conducted by true Muslims, is thrown to dust, 'And We shall turn to the deeds they have done and scatter them like dust ("The Differentiator"[15] 25:23, p 228). This means that if a Muslim is evil or behaves abominably but believes in Islam, he is eventually destined to Heaven, whereas a Christian or believers in other faiths or disbelievers, no matter how good they are and whatever they do, is destined to hell!

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[13] The miraculous journey undertaken by Muhammad during one single night. It is mentioned in the seventeenth surah (chapter).

[14] The eighth surah (chapter).

[15] Surah (chapter) 25.

Ideally, multiculturalism implies accepting the otherness of others without any qualification but if that other systematically stigmatizes you as deaf, dumb, and blind and blasphemous, a human being who is preferably exterminated from the face of the earth, then there is, I think, no alternative to revealing the falsity of the religious discourse altogether!

Unfortunately, the West, who is supposed to lead the world in technology and free-thinking, is not at this stage entitled to embark on such a project of revealing the falsity of the religious discourse systematically to liberate the world from the domination of men of religion. Why is that? On the one hand, the West has traces of religious culture which affect the lives of most people even superficially; on the other hand, it adopts a diplomatic discourse which emphasizes that religion itself is essentially good but the fundamentalists and the Jihadists distort religion by misinterpreting certain verses to promote their ends. The West is also divided and busy looking after its self-interests and sometimes it lacks plans to save the world from some serious problems, such as pollution and the demographic explosion. Moreover, the superpowers often work against one another and turn a blind eye on human rights and other pressing issues which are constantly violated particularly in third-world countries. In both Iran and Saudi Arabia, for example, the opposition is severely crushed and never tolerated and both countries still apply the death penalty for adultery. Thus, this radical solution of dismantling religious thinking isn't likely to be taken seriously.

Also I am wondering if this radical solution will be able to change the people's traditional trust in religion, particularly people who have inherited faith blindly without questioning anything. It may, however, urge some academics and the intelligentsia, in general, at least to check for themselves everything rather than rely on those self-appointed guardians of religious culture who manipulate the naivety of people in any direction following their own orientation and self-interest. What complicates the picture further is the psychological relief which is found in religion according to most people. Some of those who doubt the efficacy of the religious discourse submissively protest, "What's the alternative?" They behave and think as if this important matter were a game of bargaining and not a question of true belief based on evidence and experimentation.

Unfortunately, when you trap people to provide one single proof about the reality of any religion, they resort to a history that has often and many times been distorted by manipulative editors. These people respond as they do to the logic of power. Muslim apologetics, for example, try to convince people by hook or by the crook of the idea that Islamic legislation is infallible since its source is God and they resort to different kinds of miracles in order to silence any possible objection about anything.

Some Muslim scientists have abandoned science and dedicate all their energies to prove the scientific miracles of the Qur'an such as spreading the idea that the moon was split into two halves because the Qur'an mentions that, "The hour draws near; the moon is split into two" ("The Moon"[16] 54, 1, p. 350). They also spread the idea that the Big Bang theory can be found in the *Qur'an* in the following verse, "Are the disbelievers not aware that the heavens and the earth used to be joined together and that We ripped them apart…?" ("*Prophets*"[17] 21: 30, p. 204) ignoring the fact that the age of the big Bang is approximately 13,7 billion years when the earth itself (approximately 4,6 billion years old) was not yet formed. Others make efforts to prove the uniqueness of the *Qur'an*. The numerical miracles and the perfect legislation are among the numerous Koranic claims made by these scholars. Therefore, the picture is quite gloomy. Ordinary people are constantly brainwashed and fed with ideas that make them quite sure that they are on the right track. It is a bitter fact that humanity may need a long time to be awakened and realize how damaging religious manipulation is to all life in general!

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[17] Another surah (chapter) of the *Qur'an*.

Literature and (Multi)Cultural Discourses

George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Approaches to Multicultural Discourses

María Jesús LORENZO-MODIA[1]

1. Introduction

Living in the high Victorian period and in a country that ruled an Empire, George Eliot had a particular interest in depicting characters that belonged to societies in which different cultures lived together. This is true about many of her novels which show her cosmopolitan interest in the coexistence of different ethnic groups and/or religious faiths. Her fiction is well-known in the English-speaking world. As the author of *Middlemarch*, she is considered to be a major literary figure. *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Romola* (1863), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), they all show her sympathy for the Catholic and Jewish faiths and their respective communities, and how they could be socially rejected in some European countries. Likewise, she dealt with Gypsies in different texts, such as *Janet's Repentance* in *Scenes of Clerical Life* (II 150). This ethnic group was also alluded to by Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss*, in an episode in which the young heroine wanted to join the Travellers and abandon her home. The Zincali are also key characters in *The Spanish Gypsy: A Poem* (1868), the object of the present study, since – to the best of my knowledge – this dramatic poem has not received the critical attention it deserves, and had only a modest reception, with few published translations until recently (Lorenzo-Modia *Gitanilla*).

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This article will assess the impact of such categories as identity, gender, nationality, race and ethnicity in the aforementioned text in Spain, a fluid country during the period in which the poem is set, not only at war, but also trying to regain territory that had been occupied by another ethnic group for about 800 years. The methodology to be used here is that of multicultural studies (Bean 1989 and Hage 2012), postcolonial studies, as explored by Edward Said (1978), the concept of hybridity, as expounded by Homi Bhabha (2004), plus reception studies, particularly as seen in the work of Hans Robert Jauss (1982), Roman Ingarden (1989), and Wolfgang Iser (1993).

2. Analysis

George Eliot's intellectual interest in different religions and cultures was evident not only in her fiction, but also in her translations into English of texts by the Jewish intellectual Baruch (Benedictus) de Spinoza (1632-1677), and by her German contemporaries David Friedrich Strauss, *Life of Jesus* (1846) and Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (1854). She shared literary, political, religious and moral interests with her partner, the psychologist and literary critic George Henry Lewes (1817-1878), author of *The Spanish Drama* (1846), *Study of Psychology* (1879) and essays on spiritualism and materialism (1876). They both addressed the great intellectual issues of the nineteenth century in their respective works. Both Eliot and Lewes travelled extensively to different countries in Europe, including Spain, in whose culture they were both deeply interested. Eliot was fascinated by the Gypsies in Andalusia. While visiting the country, she went to their settlements to witness their dancing and singing, and to learn about their culture and origins (see Lorenzo-Modia "George Eliot in Spain"). It is clear that both Eliot and Lewes had deep knowledge of the situation of the various Traveller communities in Spain, both synchronically and diachronically. This is one of the key topics in *The Spanish Gypsy*, in which the situation of minoritized cultures is explored by the poet. In order to deal with multicultural issues in the text, it is worth bearing in mind that Spain is nowadays a nation formed by various autonomous regions with their own governments, cultures, and languages. This situation is the result of a long process of unification that began in the Middle Ages and lasted no less than eight centuries. During this period the peoples from Northern Africa

settled in Spain and ruled most of the country. For many years the Iberian Peninsula was a melting pot of cultures, including Catholics, Muslims, Jews, and Gypsies, who lived in apparent harmony. Chronologically, the poem is situated in 1492, a year which marked a turning point in Spanish history. On the one hand, various ethnic groups were expelled from the Peninsula, an attempt at ethnic cleansing which resulted in a diaspora of these peoples; on the other, after the reconquest of the whole territory of Spain power got more and more centralized.

Eliot's interest in Judaism is pervasive in her texts, and would resurface in 1866 when she met Emanuel Deutsch in the British Library, while composing *The Spanish Gypsy*. Eliot herself was the editor of *The Quarterly Review* (Dillane), she had a strong intellectual and professional connection with Deutsch (see Himmelfarb 65), and her interest in Judaica appears in the poem. In fact, the Jewish sources of *The Spanish Gypsy* are still an object of study, as William Baker showed in a monograph entitled *George Eliot and Judaism*. Eliot's knowledge of the historical situation of the Spanish Jews is confirmed by the use of the term *Marranos* referring to the Spanish Jews in Book I of the poem (Eliot *The Spanish Gypsy* 142), and by its explanation in one of her endnotes to the text:

> The name given by the Spanish Jews to the multitudes of their race converted to Christianity at the end of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth. The lofty derivation from *Maran-atha*, the Lord cometh, seems hardly called for, seeing that *marrano* is Spanish for *pig*. The "old Christians" learned to use the word as a term of contempt for the "new Christians," or converted Jews and their descendants; but not too monotonously, for they often interchanged it with the fine old crusted opprobrium of the name *Jew*. Still, many Marranos [sic] held the highest secular and ecclesiastical prizes in Spain, and were respected accordingly. (Eliot *The Spanish Gypsy* 299)

This book depicts, in a dramatic way, the situation of some of the Jews forced to convert to Catholicism, *conversos*, but who remained Jews at heart. One of the examples is the host, who must hide his real beliefs in order to save his life: "a [w]arranted Christian – else how to keep an inn, / Which calling asks true faith?" (10). There is another Jewish character in the poem, Sephardo, a servant in the household of the hero Don Silva who declares his true identity:

> Sephardo: My Lord, I will be frank, there's no such thing
> As naked manhood. If the stars look down
> On any mortal of our shape, whose strength
> Is to judge all things without preference,

> He is a monster, not a faithful man.
> While my heart beats, it shall wear livery, –
> My people's livery, whose yellow badge
> Marks them for Christian scorn. I will not say
> Man is first man to me, then Jew or Gentile:
> That suits the rich *marranos;* but to me
> My father is first father and then man.
> So much for frankness' sake. But let that pass.
> 'T is true at least, I am no Catholic,
> But Salomo Sephardo, a born Jew,
> Willing to serve Don Silva. (148)

Sephardo's family name alludes to the Spanish and Portuguese Jews who had come to the Iberian Peninsula from Northern Africa, *Sepharad* being the name for Spain in Hebrew. Sephardo, like his lord, will suffer the invective of Father Isidor, the Dominican friar of the Inquisition. In the end, Don Silva will have to abandon the country. He will join the diaspora, like the Jews and Gypsies, but in a solitary journey to the Catholic haven of Rome, since his intended mixed marriage was socially rejected both by the Catholic authorities of the Inquisition and by the Gypsies. The Catholic aristocrat Don Silva debates deeply when deciding to abandon his comfortable life and follow an uncertain and difficult path with the Gypsies, since love and reason was his motto. However, once there, he feels that he must abandon his noble adventures in love since his new group rejects him. His tragedy is that, having joined the enemy through love, and having accidentally killed the heroine's father, his original people will not accept him back either. Thus, Don Silva represents the will of integration in another culture, yet the turbulent world in which he lives in makes this impossible.

Jews had been present in the Hispanic Peninsula from antiquity, and they formed a very powerful community in medieval Spain, both under Muslim and Catholic rule. The joint monarchy of the Kingdoms of Castille and Aragón (known as the Catholic Monarchs), the incorporation of other kingdoms in the north of the Peninsula, Columbus' prospective voyage to America, and the fight against the Muslim *taifas* in the South, are the backdrop to late-medieval Spain, in which *The Spanish Gypsy* is set. One must bear in mind that in 1492, the last Muslim kingdom in Spain, Granada, was conquered, and consequently the Arabs were expelled from their last stronghold on the Peninsula, after the capitulation of Santa Fe. Jews and Gypsies were also ordered to leave the

country. Meanwhile, the poem reflects the situation of Columbus trying to persuade the monarchs to subsidize his voyage to the Indies:

> And so in Córdova through patient nights
> Columbus watches, or he sails in dreams
> Between the setting stars and finds new day;
> Then wakes again to the old weary days,
> Girds on the cord and frock of pale Saint Francis,
> And like him zealous pleads with foolish men.
> "I ask but for a million maravedis:
> Give me three caravels to find a new world,
> New shores, new realms, new soldiers for the Cross.
> *Son cosas grandes!"* Thus he pleads in vain;
> Yet faints not utterly, but pleads anew, […]. (7)

Eliot is aware of the economic differences among social strata. In the poem it is the poor characters who anticipate and suffer problems most intensely, and the discrimination of various ethnic groups is clearly depicted. For example, Blasco describes the difficult position of Jews:

> But for this banishment
> Some men are hot on, it ill pleases me.
> The Jews, now (sirs, if any Christian here
> Had Jews for ancestors, I blame him not;
> We cannot all be Goths of Aragon), –
> Jews are not fit for heaven, but on earth
> They are most useful. 'Tis the same with mules,
> Horses, or oxen, or with any pig
> Except Saint Anthony's. They are useful here
> (The Jews, I mean) though they may go to hell.
> And, look you, useful sins, – why Providence
> Sends Jews to do 'em, saving Christian souls. (37)

As can be seen in this excerpt, Eliot emphasized the contradictions that existed in Spain regarding ethnic minorities. Moreover, she wrote from a dual position: on the one hand, that of the nineteenth-century writer addressing her contemporary English readership, and on the other, being as faithful as possible to the fifteenth-century history of a country which would emerge as a global empire (see Pratt). Thus, the text problematizes not only matters of gender, migration, racism, and multiculturalism in the Iberian Peninsula during the fight for the reunification of Spain, or in nineteenth-century Britain,

but also effectively addresses twenty-first-century readers, since these issues are still debated nowadays.

George Eliot is not only interested in Jews but also in the Zincali and she is concerned with the double discrimination suffered by women belonging to these minorities. In the poem the main character is a young motherless Gypsy heroine. These nomads had come to Spain in 1425, when King Alphonsus V of Aragón allowed them into the country, and the same could be said of King Peter II, who also authorized their presence in the Kingdom of Castille. At this stage these Travellers were said to come from Egypt Minor (i.e. present-day Turkey) and, consequently, they were known as "Egyptians." The term was shortened to "gipcyan" in the sixteenth century, "gypsy" being an evolution of the original word. Although the first decree of expulsion was issued in 1492, they were even authorized to embark with Christopher Columbus on some of his voyages to America: "[…] cualesquier personas, hombres y mujeres, delincuentes […]" [any person, men, women, offenders] (Royal Medina del Campo Decree, 22 June 1497, qtd. in Pumar 12). While in their first years in Iberia there were no negative stereotypes about them, this situation soon changed, to such a degree that there were new expulsions, and even extermination decrees, both in the seventeenth (1612) and eighteenth centuries (1749), the latter especially by Zenón de Somodevilla y Bengoechea (1702-181) (Real Orden), the Minister of War during the reign of Ferdinand VI also known as the Marquis of Ensenada (Martínez, Gómez Urdáñez). It is worth noting that Eliot preferred the term "zíncalo" over the derogatory "gypsy," although she used both throughout her work, and the latter in the title, probably at the suggestion of her editors, since the more erudite form "Zíncalo" would not have been attractive enough for an English readership. The opprobrious persecutions of Gypsies are still vindicated or commemorated today, both in the Spanish daily press (see Jiménez) and in academic publications (Martínez, Gómez Urdáñez). However, despite the various expulsion Royal Decrees, these Travellers remained in the Iberian Peninsula territory, and in nineteenth-century Europe there existed a passion for the Spanish world, identified in particular with the cultural influence of Gypsies within it.

Eliot considered these Nomads in her letters as the representatives of Spanish quintessence: "The genuine Spanish life" (Haight IV 341). In *The Spanish Gypsy,* she follows the literary fashion of including these inhabitants of

Southern Europe, particularly the Gypsies and the Moors (as they are called in the text) both as a source of inspiration and as an element of exotic escape. This topic has been used by earlier writers in both English and French. Eliot shares this European and American tendency to explore the history of Spain and its various cultural strata. Examples can be found in texts such as *Gil Blas de Santillana* (1715-35) by Alain René Lesage, influenced by the Spanish picaresque; Lord Byron's *Don Juan* (1819), inspired from a medieval legend; *The Alhambra: A Series of Tales and Sketches of the Moors and Spaniards,* published in 1832 by Washington Irving (under the pseudonym Geoffrey Crayon); *Carmen* (1845) by the French writer Prosper Mérimée; and texts by the writer, missionary, and Bible salesman George Henry Borrow: *The Zincali: An Account of the Gypsies of Spain* (1841) and the novel *Lavrengo: The Scholar, the Gypsy, the Priest* (1851). It is quite evident that Eliot knew George Borrow's texts, which show an ambivalent vision of Gypsies. He says that they do not accept the existing religions and are only faithful to their own people (see Borrow *Zincali* 9). Borrow stresses the fact that their diasporic condition has not deprived them of their beliefs and solidarity (*Zincali* 97, 99). In Borrow's texts, Gypsies are also said to be heretics and not to be trusted (see Borrow *Zincali* 93-95). Moreover, he indicates that the ethnic minorities in Spain, such as the Jews and the Muslims, were persecuted by the Inquisition, while the Gypsies were not among the priorities of the Tribunal since their persecution would not yield significant benefits, in terms of either money or knowledge (see Borrow *Zincali* 90). Due to the alleged passion of the Gypsy temperament and culture, there are many contemporary studies on the literary aspects of this topos. The titles of some essays attest to how fruitful the topic was, and the extent to which Eliot herself participated in this literary trend promoting, as she did, respect and understanding: *The Spanish Gypsy: The History of a European Obsession*, by Lou Charnon-Deutsch (2004), *The Gypsy as a Trope in Victorian and Modern Literature*, by Abigail R. Bardi (2008), *Gypsies and the British Imagination 1807-1930*, by Deborah Epstein Nord (2013) and *The Spanish Craze: America's Fascination with the Hispanic World, 1779-1939* by Richard L. Kagan (2019). Despite all these folkloric references to Zincali, Eliot points very clearly to the subservient, animal-like roles played by members of this ethnic group within society:

> The very Gypsies, curbed and harnessed well,
> Would make draught cattle, feed on the vermin too,

Cost less than grazing brutes, and turn bad food
To handsome carcasses; sweat at the forge
For little wages, and well drilled and flogged
Might work like slaves, some Spaniards looking on.
I deal in plate, and am no priest to say
What God may mean, save when he means plain sense;
But when he sent the Gypsies wandering
In punishment because they sheltered not
Our Lady and Saint Joseph (and no doubt
Stole the small ass they fled with into Egypt,
Why send them here? 'Tis plain he saw the use
They'd be to Spaniards. Shall we banish them,
And tell God we know better? 'Tis a sin
They talk of vermin; but, sirs, vermin large
Were made to eat the small, or else to eat
The noxious rubbish, and picked Gypsy men
Might serve in war to climb, be killed, and fall,
To make an easy ladder. (Eliot *The Spanish Gypsy* 37)

Eliot's text is set at the end of the so-called War of the *Reconquista* (reconquest), which brought about a civilian conflict among the different peoples who lived on the Peninsula and also created unstable political conditions. This dramatic poem in blank verse problematizes the coexistence of the different ethnic groups by means of a mixed-ethnicity love story and adds powerful issues of gender to the story. The heroine, Fedalma, has been brought up in a Catholic community, yet she turns out to be an adopted child originally belonging to the Gypsy nomads. She is in love with a powerful Catholic nobleman and expects to have an unconventional, inter-ethnic marriage with him:

The time is great, and greater no man's trust
Than his who keeps the fortress for his king,
Wearing great honours as some delicate robe
Brocaded o'er with names 't were sin to tarnish.
Born de la Cerda, Calatravan knight,
Count of Segura, fourth Duke of Bedmár, […]
Offshoot from that high stock of old Castile
Whose topmost branch is proud Medina Celi, –
Such titles with their blazonry are his
Who keeps his fortress, sworn Alcaÿde,
Lord of the valley, master of the town,

Commanding whom he will, himself commanded
By Christ his Lord who sees him from the Cross
And from bright heaven where the Mother pleads; –
By good Saint James upon the milk-white steed,
Who leaves his bliss to fight for chosen Spain; –
By the dead gaze of all his ancestors; –
And by the mystery of his Spanish blood
Charged with the awe and glories of the past. (8)

The prospective coming together of Don Silva and Fedalma is defined in an anticipatory way in the poem as "the union of light and darkness" (30). She appears to be infatuated by the preeminent social position of her lover and seems briefly tempted by his jewels: "Don Silva: 'You must not look at jewels any more,/ But look at me'" (83). However, the text shows that Fedalma was somewhat marginalized in a society with oppressive policies to minority groups, and she sympathises with these peoples in their poverty. She is not prepared to fulfil the role of the Victorian "angel in the house," since she values freedom: "O horrible,/ To be in chains! Why, I withall my bliss/ Have longed sometimes to fly and be at large" (80-81). Her innate artistic talents are proscribed by the patriarchal powers in the poem; when she shows her dancing skills in public, in Santiago Plaza, she is reprimanded by the male characters. On the one hand, her lover says that her talents are not for public display and, on the other, her father reproaches her behaviour from an ethnic minority viewpoint: "The daughter of the Zíncalo makes sport/ For those who spit upon her people's name" (106). It is at this stage that she learns that she originally belonged to a different community, that her natural father has returned in order to ask her to lead his people abroad, since he is about to die, and that they are no longer welcome on the Iberian Peninsula. She has a profound inner debate, and accepts the invitation to join the Gypsy group, provided that her lover is allowed to accompany her. Don Silva is prepared to abandon all the power and glory he enjoys both due to his aristocratic origins and because of his victories on the battlefield. However, his inner conflict and the predictably bad consequences of his benevolent decision are revealed to him in his dreams: "Don Silva: A wicked dream! If ever I left you,/ Even in dreams, it was some demon who dragged me,/ And with fierce struggle I awaked myself" (81). Still, he decides to follow his beloved Gypsy, who is equated in an ambiguous way to a dark queen: "Don Silva: 'Yes, you shall ride upon a palfrey, black/ To match

Bavieca. Not Queen Isabel / Will be a sight more gladdening to men's eyes/ Than my dark queen Fedalma […]'" (82). However, no matter how prepared he is to help the militia units on her behalf, he is not welcome by the allied Arab and Gypsy fighters, since they feel that he is not one of them, and would be "a false zíncalo" (242).

In the end, the Gypsy leader, Fedalma, abandons her fiancé because she is persuaded that she would be rejected – through intolerance – by both Gypsies and Catholics and considered only as a sensual figure by the latter. She prefers to lead her people, forced to wander in diaspora, like the Jews, but probably in a poorer economic state, and with her father on the verge of dying. They also declare that they have an ancient faith and cohesion as a group and, as a consequence, duty and freedom are tragically preferred by the heroine over love:

> Fedalma: (bitterly). The Gypsies' faith? Men say they have none.
> Zarca: Oh, it is a faith
> Taught by no priest, but by their beating hearts:
> Faith to each other: the fidelity
> Of fellow-wanderers in a desert place
> Who share the same dire thirst, and therefore share
> The scanty water: the fidelity
> Of men whose pulses leap with kindred fire. (110)

In the poem, Gypsies even consider Jews their friends since they are also expelled by the Spaniards. Zarca, Fedalma's father, is well aware that they are considered to be the "Others":

> Men of Bedmár, well-wishers, and allies,
> Whether of Moorish or of Hebrew blood,
> Who, being galled by the hard Spaniard's yoke,
> Have welcomed our quick conquest as release,
> I, Zarca, the Zincalo chieftain, hold
> By delegation of the Moorish King
> Supreme command within this town and fort. (248)

3. Conclusions

The Spanish Gypsy is a hybrid text in terms of both form and content. Formally, it shares features with narratives, ballads, and drama. From the

thematic perspective, it explores the possibility of a hybrid coexistence of different communities, beyond ethnic and religious persecutions. Metaphorically, it deals with the acceptance of positive values in the "Other;" if this compliance does not happen, tragedy is the only way out of the situation. The poem deals with the relations with other cultures and how their values are not usually respected. Eliot relies on the character of a young girl inculcated with the values of an ancestral culture that others do not respect. However, what is relevant and innovative is that Eliot focuses not only on an exotic depiction of the country, but on the exploration of the possibility that free women may exist in a peaceful multicultural society.

The dramatic poem has a tragic ending since both Fedalma and Don Silva accept that their destinies separate them. She will lead her wandering people, and he will be unfairly treated by the Inquisition Tribunal since he had collaborated both with the Moors and their Gypsy allies. Moreover, the poem addresses issues of gender in a marginalized Gypsy community, which will be led by a female character. As we know, Eliot habitually included in her texts powerful and innovative women characters who confront their surrounding world. Such examples include Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss*, Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch*, and Princess Halm Eberstein, mother of Daniel Deronda, in the eponymous novel, who defies her father in order to emancipate herself and have a professional career as an opera singer after having had a child. The same occurs in the case of Fedalma in *The Spanish Gypsy* (see Pardo, 356-375). Fedalma valiantly confronts the conventional wisdom that stops women from having inter-ethnic relationships: "[…] we women still / Are not well dealt with" (Eliot *The Spanish Gypsy* 85), particularly if they are poor. Elinor Shaffer has recently noted that George Eliot was not only speaking to nineteenth-century readers, but to all of us who may not be aware of what a multicultural society should be like (see Shaffer 13). My contention is that by setting this Victorian poem in medieval Iberia, Eliot questions the possibility of coexistence in a multicultural Spain in which people of different religious denominations experienced various degrees of tolerance. Additionally, she explores issues of gender and belonging, in an intersectional approach to the problems faced by a young Gypsy girl, adopted by a Catholic family and in love with a Castilian hidalgo. However, there are very powerful political and social forces that make a multicultural society impossible and which bring with

them intolerance and suffering. As a consequence, following her inner freedom and feelings of duty, the heroine renounces her present happiness and prospective wealth by accepting her people, no matter how poor and defeated they might be, and becomes the leader of the Gypsies. All in all, *The Spanish Gypsy* explores a multicultural situation of conflict in which the heroine makes personal decisions that show moral integrity and social responsibility – even if this means a renunciation of personal happiness. In this text Eliot advocates the peaceful belonging of characters to different, coexisting religious creeds, but as a nineteenth-century writer she cannot foresee this as possible. Yet, the mere presentation of these issues is a great step for women in all multicultural societies.

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The Imposter in Jerusalem. Cultural (Re)Mappings and Re(Locations) in *Operation Shylock*

Cristina CHEVEREȘAN

1. Introduction

The major antagonism in *Operation Shylock* is between Philip Roth, the author's biographically-inspired fictional doppelganger, who flies to Israel, and the usurper of his identity, whom he confronts there: a faux-Roth that he nicknames Moishe Pipik ("Yiddish for Moses' Bellybutton, a childish shadow self frequently related to children" - Nadel 180). The historiographic metafiction appearance of the novel is ensured by the constant insertion of identifiable, real-life figures. Apart from Philip Roth, the writer, and his wife, Claire Bloom, the plotline actively features Romanian-born Israeli deportee Aharon Appelfeld (concentration camp survivor turned successful Hebrew-language professor and author), alongside former Ukrainian-American Nazi extermination camp guard, John Demjanjuk. It also references such recognizable personalities as Carl Jung, Jerzy Kosinski, Lech Walesa, Bruno Schulz, or Elie Wiesel. The gallery is completed by fictional characters, whose verisimilitude in context is part of Roth's textual entanglement with 'Jewish mischief', as well as an illustration of his lasting concerns with duplicity, multiplicity, and the constructedness and performativity of identity.

This paper's discussion starts from the antagonist's condensed explanation of his creed, Diasporism. In his words, the conglomerate of principles he embraces would, presumably, solve the long standing issues of Jewish survival by the systematic repatriation of Israeli Jews of European descent to their ancestral homelands: "Once the European Jews and their families have been resettled and the population has been halved, then the state

can be reduced to its 1948 borders, the army can be demobilized, and those Jews who have lived in an Islamic cultural matrix for centuries can continue to do so, independently, autonomously, but in peace and harmony with their Arab neighbours" (Roth 28).

Such passages are scattered abundantly throughout the pages, and prompt the analysis of the novel's literal and symbolical blurring of the already-mentioned multiple boundaries. This intentional procedure becomes essential to dissecting, (de)constructing, and (re)defining individual and communal, (pluri)cultural identities under turbulent circumstances. The examination of the novel's reception and its underlying controversies becomes, thus, imperative. Its focal points are Jewishness and authenticity, conflict and ambivalence, tension and divisiveness, history and humanity. I claim that Roth opts for a symbolic heteroglossia in order to render the coexisting ways of experiencing, conceptualizing, and understanding the overarching matter of "Jewish mischief".

2. A False Confession Gone Viral

As is the case with various other Rothian works, when studying the 1993 novel, *Operation Shylock*, one will inevitably come across the heated controversies it triggered at the time of its publication and ever since. Consequently, a brief overview of the book's reception is relevant for a proper understanding of the swirl of accusations and (mis)understandings surrounding the author's alleged "confession". They are predicated upon a kaleidoscope of perspectives that easily succeeded to offend and irritate a plethora of readers. Roth's jocular initial claim of subjectivity and personal identification with the exposed views is implicitly contradicted by the plural nature of the featured voices, meant to emphasize the undeniably fictional nature of the whole endeavour. The ensuing, fragmented postmodern narrative provides insight into an intriguing, and all the more realistic, battle of versions and arguments.

Moreover, the Rothian farce goes full circle. From beginning to end, from the very title to the concluding note to the reader, it convincingly testifies to the author's awareness of the predictable reactions to his con- and meta-textual

game, and to his careful premeditation thereof. The author's genuine intentions and practical actions are fully revealed by the end of his experimental story. *Operation Shylock* is, eventually, followed by the type of disclaimer that would, customarily, precede such a work.

> The book is a work of fiction. The formal conversational exchange with Aharon Appelfeld quoted in chapters 3 and 4 first appeared in *The New York Times* on March 11, 1988; the verbatim minutes of the January 27, 1988, morning session of the trial of John Demjanjuk in Jerusalem District Court provided the courtroom exchanges quoted in chapter 9. Otherwise the names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. This confession is false. (Roth 246)

Despite the brevity and clarity of this closing statement, *Operation Shylock* has remained a problematic text to quite a number of interpreters. The reason may well be the author's audacity to toy with fact and fiction and to create uncomfortable pockets of in-between-ness, meant to reflect real-life conundrums. Projected, ambitiously, against the physical background of Israel, the book largely captures essential dilemmas of Jewishness within and without the borders of the State. It foregrounds a number of theoretical and practical standpoints that challenge the very ideas of militantism and partisanship. Such notions seem far too dear to a contemporary world which, under the guise of tolerance and correctness, increasingly embraces cardinal oppositions and radical judgements.

Roth, however, refutes clear-cut polarizations and pleads for nuances. He insists on offering an open platform for the discussion of complex and, oftentimes, burdensome and troublesome notions related to the essence of Jewishness. Such an attitude is bound to stir enmity and spite on various, conflicting sides. As pointed out by Elaine Kauvar, in her meditation upon "This Doubly Reflected Communication. Philip Roth's Autobiographies", Roth was relentlessly judged for his willingness to include critical, if not altogether belligerent views in a novel that, at its very heart, advocates openness and moderation and exposes the dangers of extremism on all sides of the cultural and political spectrum.

> The publication of *Operation Shylock* in 1993 reopened and added fire to the debate about Roth's Jewish credentials. Jewish communal criticism of *Operation Shylock* coalesced on the fact that characters in the book articulate a variety of

> opposing attitudes about sensitive subjects, such as the meaning of Israel to American Jewish identity and the impact of the Holocaust on contemporary Jewish life. If Roth were concerned with the survival of Jews as a people and Judaism as a civilization, they assert, he would not give characters who hate Jews and Judaism voices just as passionate and powerful as those who seem unswervingly committed to Jewish continuity. More than one reviewer in the Jewish press declared indignantly that Roth's characters' profusion of pro- and anti-Jewish attitudes reflect the author's inability to make a commitment to the values of Jewish survival. Others went so far as to declare the book a "regurgitation" and the author an exemplar of "self-hate... one of the most virulent destructive forces". (14)

Against such a convoluted background of preposterous allegations, blatantly disconnected from the very notion of literariness and its (dis)contents, *Operation Shylock* stands out as a sequel to the identity quest prefigured in *The Counterlife* (1986). It is inextricably related to and stemming from the author's own explorations of and revelations vis-à-vis the literal and symbolical frontiers of Jewishness and its uncharted, civilizational and even emotional territories. As such, it is the comprehensive and programmatically inclusive product of a particular type of intellectual approach, as further highlighted by Kauvar: "The book is not repetitive, or meandering, or a self-indulgent game with mirrors. Instead, Roth's 'confession' continues the search, begun in *The Counterlife*, of an assimilated, highly literate, and intelligent American Jew for the essence of Jewish identity" (16). Thus, the careful listener and scrupulous reader may be able to distinguish, from amidst the seldom consonant chorus in the novel, the notes and passages which could, indeed, provide plausible clues about the author's own philosophical musings.

Weaving portions of his real-life interview with Bukovina-born Israeli writer Aharon Appelfeld into the dense tissue of the novel, Roth makes it a point to reveal the questionability of ultimate truths. In an enlightening, highly meditative metafictional statement of the interviewee, the reader encounters a section that may convincingly be transferred and function as a cautionary tale. As such, it may be read as revealing for Roth's own writing and position in relation to both his creative process and his inquisitive readership.

> To write things as they happened means to enslave oneself to memory, which is only a minor element in the creative process. To my mind, to create means to order, sort out and choose the words and the pace that fit the work. The materials are indeed materials from one's life, but, ultimately, the creation is an

> independent creature. I tried several times to write "the story of my life" in the woods after I ran away from the camp. But all my efforts were in vain. I wanted to be faithful to reality and to what really happened. But the chronicle that emerged proved to be a weak scaffolding. The result was rather meager, an unconvincing imaginary tale. The things that are most true are easily falsified. (Roth 56)

This generic warning regarding the quests for truth and authenticity in day-to-day existence and authorship alike seems quite fitting for Roth's own struggle with criticism. He found himself attacked particularly by the kind of readers who find it hard to distinguish between fact and fiction, and whose undeterred perception of the biographical as central to any kind of storytelling he relishes to challenge and, implicitly, expose as naive. Should the audience be avidly looking for a genuine disclosure of intimate convictions in the novel, it would inevitably end up disoriented and disillusioned: it has never been Roth's aim to make himself the protagonist. In fact, as it turns out, the true protagonist of *Operation Shylock* is none of its convoluted, competing voices per se, but rather the mythical homeland of Israel and the characters' symbolic position(ing)s in relation to it.

3. "Where Is Home"? That Is the Question!

Jewishness has always been part and parcel of Rothian life stories. Its literal embeddedness in an American frame of mind and comprehension was crucial to the entire range of writings preceding *The Counterlife* and *Operation Shylock*, wherein the filtering consciousness belongs to the assimilated, diasporic Jew. Once Israel becomes a concrete, physical presence in the novels, once the eternal return is enacted and begins to produce effects upon and generate nuances in the otherwise casual traveller's interpretation of historical and cultural circumstances, the focus shifts to the categories of social actors that populate this territory.

The spectrum of action and reaction realistically widens to encompass the complexity of possible responses to matters of belonging to and identification with a lost home, be it (f)actual or merely imaginary. Debra

Shostak offers an insightful analysis of "The Diaspora Jew and 'The Instinct for Impersonation'" in *Contemporary Literature* (1997), pointing out that

> Until *The Counterlife*, Roth's fiction resoundingly situated the Jew in the Diaspora and, while he has repeatedly inquired into the meaning of being a Diaspora Jew (especially in the United States), it is only in these later two novels that Roth has tested that meaning against the icon of Israel. Pipik provides a challenge to Jewish identity by proposing a voluntary return to the Diaspora, which would effectively erase Israel as the geographical sign and ethical centre of Jewishness. When Philip, during one of is impersonations of Pipik, promotes the "Jew for whom authenticity as a Jew means living in the Diaspora, for whom the Diaspora is the normal condition and Zionism is the anormality" (170), he uncovers the implications of Pipik's attempt to rewrite the narrative of Jewish identity. The Diasporist Jew of Pipik's plan, the one who has not just stayed in exile but had actively chosen to make exile his or her way of life, is a radically altered Jew with a radically altered conception of the nation in which he or she resides. In effect, the corollary to the historicity of "Jewishness" is that to deny the position of the "Jew" in any of the terms in which it has theretofore been conceptualized. Pipik then becomes the new navel of the Jewish world, with new laws – a true Moses Bellybutton. (743)

Thus, it is the radical, apparently counterfactual and dystopian, yet not altogether preposterous ideas formulated by Pipik in the novel that expose the ideological tensions surrounding the controversial dynamic of centrality and marginality in a world that is, in fact, predicated on displacement, dislocation, uprooting and inherent alienation. Roth is never shy to push boundaries and take assumptions to extremes. He underlines the irreconcilability and, sometimes, utter absurdity of theories that are and have been notably embraced, although they nonchalantly ignore inconvenient facts and shades of meaning that practice has proved irrefutable. In *Operation Shylock*, the glorifying enthusiasm of the Diasporist utopia reaches its peak in the projection of the triumphant return of the Jews to Europe, rendered rather sinister by the association with the mass train-rides:

> You know what will happen in Warsaw, at the railway station, when the first trainload of Jews returns? There will be crowds to welcome them. People will be jubilant. People will be in tears. They will be shouting, 'Our Jews are back! Our Jews are back!' The spectacle will be transmitted by television throughout the world. And what a historic day for Europe, for Jewry, for all mankind when the cattle cars that transported Jews to death camps are transformed by the

> Diasporist movement into decent, comfortable railway carriages carrying Jews by the tens of thousands back to their native cities and towns. A historic day for human memory, for human justice, and for atonement too. (Roth 30)

The image itself, alongside the adjacent celebrations, appears rather ludicrous to the critical mind, prone to identify and pinpoint the flaws in any design. Roth is, once more, quick to counter-argue. In doing so, he proves that the entire novel, via its multitude of narratives and voices, does, in fact, represent an attempt to strike balance and equidistance in the matter of Jewish authenticity, as it sets out to represent the major competing arguments. Hence, Diasporist elation is, rapidly and not accidentally, ironically confronted with the reality of the residual Anti-Semitism of Central-Europe. After the Second World War, the region has fallen prey to different, yet still ominous types of totalitarianism and authoritarianism. The following line of questioning seems particularly justified in the context of the turbulent 1980s:

> You speak about resettling Jews in Poland, Romania, Germany? In Slovakia, the Ukraine, Yugoslavia, the Baltic states? And you realize, do you," I asked him, "how much hatred for Jews still exists in most of these countries?" "Are they lining up, the Romanian Jews who are dying to go back to Ceausescu's Romania? Are they lining up, the Polish Jews who are dying to return to Communist Poland? Those Russians struggling to leave the Soviet Union, is your plan to turn them around at the Tel Aviv airport and force them onto the next flight back to Moscow? Anti-Semitism aside, you think people fresh from these terrible places will voluntarily choose to return just because Philip Roth tells them to? (Roth 30)

The undisguised disbelief points to the actual living conditions in communist Central-Europe: ridden by its own ghosts, intolerant in numerous ways, menacing to its own stable population. The reaction to a wave of unexpected immigration/ repatriation by a socio-cultural group which has been historically expulsed and eradicated from the national bodies of the aforementioned countries is quite predictable. The radical, evident opposition of the two interlocutors' views upon the same mental construct indicates the importance of immersion in and detached knowledge of context when making clear-cut statements or decisions regarding individual and communal trajectories. Timing, as well as opportunity, prove essential to proper understanding and action.

4. Israel between Stability and Conflict: A (Semi-)Fictional Mirror

The recognizable fictional microcosm that Roth creates illustrates the paradoxes and contingencies of the Jewish self, whose fragmented condition is reflected in the character's narrative and personal choices. As Kauvar indicates,

> What the third volume of Roth's autobiographical trilogy teaches, therefore, is that in Israel, where a Jew might expect stability and simplicity, he finds only conflict and ambivalence - a repetition of the Diaspora. The burdens of the homeland and those of exile are paradoxically equivalent and equally prevailing. […] Roth's texts both clarify and change the reality to which they refer: they redescribe reality by submitting it to the imaginative variations of fiction. To undercut fact is to restore to fiction the sovereignty of truth; it is to follow in the footsteps of Sigmund Freud. However ambivalent, however splintered, however problematic, the self as Roth envisages it, and as he images it, thrives in multiple forms and thrives precisely because of their conflicting impulses and clashing encounters. For Philip Roth, as for Soren Kierkegaard, life consists not of synthesis but of contradiction: existence "is that child who is begotten by the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, and is therefore continually striving. (1995, 16)

This rich, multilayered interpretation is particularly astute in terms of the main distinctions and overlappings that it identifies and distinguishes between. On the one hand, *Operation Shylock* vividly and bluntly captures the composite realities of 1980s Israel: constantly torn between its fantasies of stability and its potential for conflict, which can be observed against the background of the notorious war criminal John Demjanjuk's trial. On the other hand, it illustrates the paradoxes of survival, the mechanics of progression, the rough, yet necessary edges of dialogue and confrontation. It puts forth the daring notion that it may be dissonance itself that makes each and every note of the chorus of Jewish selves and counter-selves be distinctly heard. Narrator "Roth"'s encounter with his fabricated doppelganger foregrounds a deconstruction of identity that functions as a pretext for the reconstruction and rearrangement of ideas and priorities.

Author Roth's technique is one of statement and explanation, challenge and investigation. These are doubled by the constant vacillation of the analytical mind, which resides both within and without the story itself. Accidental or engaged actors, his characters are always also observers of the other side, of the alternative that seems either unacceptable, or at least

inappropriate. The following summary of the aforementioned arguments against the counter-Zionist ideology of Diasporism is to be encountered in narrator Roth's conversation with Appelfeld:

> Because the duplicate XYZ believes that the state of Israel, as currently constituted, is destined to be destroyed by its Arab enemies in a nuclear exchange he invents Diasporism, a program that seeks to resettle all Israeli Jews of European origin back in those countries where they or their families were residents before the outbreak of the Second World War and thereby to avert 'a second Holocaust.' He's inspired to pursue its implementation by the example of Theodor Herzl, whose plan for a Jewish national state had seemed no less utopian and antihistorical to its critics some fifty-odd years before it came to fruition. Of the numerous strong arguments against his utopia, none is more of an impediment than the fact that these are countries in which Jewish security and well-being would be perennially menaced by the continuing existence of European anti-Semitism. (Roth 67)

As confessed a few lines earlier, rationalization seldom works whenever sensitive topics are concerned. It tends to fail particularly when macro-historical evolutions and involutions are known to have run blatantly counter to the micro-historical level of private emotions, rendered irrelevant by high level, arbitrary decisions. "My resolve to compartmentalize my impostor, to keep coolly disengaged, and while in Jerusalem, to remain concentrated solely on the assignment with Aharon had, of course, collapsed completely" (Roth 67). It is such apparently marginal comments and asides that frequently provide insight into the characters' lability, their inability to detach themselves and approach matters objectively, the incapability of seeing the greater picture as long as they are involved actors and, thus, unaware prisoners in the smaller one.

The narrator's determination to not succumb to the unpleasantness of his imposter's shenanigans is annihilated by their meeting in person and by their subsequently inevitable entanglement with each other's personal (hi)stories. Similarly, his convictions and previously-held opinions about his Jewish appurtenance begin to fade whenever the circumstances of his American upbringing make him question his authentic inscription in and identification with communal identity. Legitimacy as an author and as a genuine Jewish consciousness comes to the fore of the meditation, just as the troublemaking double, Moishe Pipik, embodies the indestructible connection to the ancestral

self. Despite his nature as a mischief-maker and as a twisted schlemiel figure, the "bellybutton" of the controversy performs an often ignored side of identity. His ironical nickname invokes insoluble familial, ethnic, cultural bonds.

> Philip's understanding of the ethnic community and his place in it spring from his time in that religious classroom (and one may assume, by association, other ethnic experiences that the young Philip may have undergone), then his inability to decipher the Hebrew script suggests a problem in acquiring any sense of a unified identity. What Philip may not realize, and what Roth the author understands all too well, is the dubiousness of fixed meanings and points of origins, especially as it relates to notions of self. (Kauvar 16).

The fixation on identity definition and preservation and the obsession with its fixity are central to the novel's exercise in and intentional failure at true dialogism. The so-called "me-itis, microcosmosis" is presented as a narrow portion of a significant macrocosm, which proves as self-absorbed as it is oblivious to the fluidity of the self and the fluctuating determinations of time, place, history, and memory in the construal of a grander sense of meaning and purpose. Coherence and cohesion are what the characters crave and what their universe, unavoidably, lacks. Yet, the novel's fragmentariness is meant to prove the unrealistic nature of such expectations against a background of constant struggle.

Foregrounding one of the novel's most relevant passages, Derek Parker Royal emphasizes the clever, if potentially confusing, conflation of author and subject in an inherent critique of ethnic identity and its limitations:

> One of the last speeches in the book – and the text is filled with speeches - underscores the unanchored and heteroglossic nature of identity, in particular ethnic identity. Smilesburger, the deceptive and enigmatic instigator of Operation Shylock, tries to persuade Philip not to publish the book, *Operation Shylock*, by preaching on the underlying causes of Jewish conflict:
>
> 'The divisiveness is not just between Jew and Jew - it is within the individual Jew. Is there a more manifold personality in all the world? I don't say divided. Divided is nothing. Even the goyim are divided. But inside every Jew there is a mob of Jews. The good Jew, the bad Jew. The new Jew, the old Jew. The lover of Jews, the hater of Jews. The friend of the goy, the enemy of the goy. The arrogant Jew, the wounded Jew. The pious Jew, the rascal Jew. The coarse Jew, the gentle Jew. The defiant Jew, the appeasing Jew. The Jewish Jew, the de-Jewed Jew. Do I have to expound upon the Jew as a three-thousand-year amassment of mirrored fragments to one who has made his fortune as a leading Jewologist of international

literature? Is it any wonder that the Jew is always disputing? He is a dispute, incarnate!' (334). (63)

The divisiveness within, the perspective on the Jew as an embodied dispute between multiple opposites is what animates Roth's novel. He explores the heteroglossia in order to render the composite essence of Jewishness and its conflicting discourses. The doubling of the narrator is a fictional pretext, employed to expose the serial mirrorings and echoes that multiply identity-related issues in the never-ending story of Israel. To many, Israel is the symbolic homeland, towards which the myth of eternal return is directed. Some, however, may and do share Pipik's rejection of the idea of harmonious cohabitation in a territory that he views as an artifact and an imposition, rather than a place of pilgrimage to the origins.

Roth-the-author does not hesitate to include the voices of those whose stability and (self)-articulation are threatened by the mere existence of the state of Israel. Hence, his imposter-antagonist's radically-bitter statements:

> Once again the Jewish people are at a terrible crossroad. Because of Israel. Because of Israel and the way that Israel endangers us all. Forget the law and listen, please, to what I have to say. The majority of Jews don't choose Israel. Its existence only confuses everyone, Jews and Gentiles alike. I repeat: Israel only endangers everyone. Jewish lives must be saved, and at absolutely any cost. But the cost is not betraying your country, it's greater than that: it's defusing the country that most endangers Jewish lives today—and that is the country called Israel! I would not say this to anyone else—I am saying this only to you. But it must be said. Pollard is just another Jewish victim of the existence of Israel—because Pollard enacted no more, really, than the Israelis demand of Diaspora Jews all the time. I don't hold Pollard responsible, I hold Israel responsible—Israel, which with its all-embracing Jewish totalism has replaced the goyim as the greatest intimidator of Jews in the world; Israel, which today, with its hunger for Jews, is, in many, many terrible ways, deforming and disfiguring Jews as only our anti-Semitic enemies once had the power to do. (Roth 52-53)

5. Recording Multiplicity: Nationalism vs Assimilationism

Roth's experimental prose strikes a number of different chords in its potential readers. It gives voice to a whole range of undisputedly passionate, yet deeply problematic and potentially disturbing emotions related to authenticity and alterity as defined by Israel and Jewishness-related disputes.

It plays upon empathy vs. dismay in its unapologetic fresco of the relationship between the American Jew and Israel as a country of discourses, tensions and concerns which seem foreign to him, regardless of their origin (Israeli and/ or Arab). Roth-the-narrator is caught in an increasingly uncomfortable middle ground which, in unsettling and historically-charged circumstances, can never be perceived as balance, but rather as side-taking. Consequently, he becomes increasingly suspicious to and of everybody he meets: he is generically expected to instantly embrace one of the enemy-causes, without hesitation.

In reality, on the contrary, the more he experiences, the more reluctant and skeptical he grows. He acts as a steady recorder of multiplicity rather than an enthusiast supporter of monolithical and unilateral truths. As Andrew Furman aptly puts it, "Roth, a self-described craftsman of Jewish mischief, refuses to look towards Israel with a myopic eye" (638). Even more than that, he is determined to have his characters embody and express views on nationalism and assimilationism that have long shaped discourses of Jewishness on all the three continents the novel spans (America, Europe, Asia). The major purpose behind the author's minutiously and unforgivingly penning his antagonist's devotion to Diasporism as a motivational, religion-like ideology among several other, just as powerful convictions, is to expose the absurdity of extremes and their unavoidable limitations.

Moreover, lectures, interviews, conversations, slogans, chants, controversies, public testimonials and private confessions are all integrated into the narrative tissue. They stand out as means of articulating perspectives that the mainstream American readership, whom the novel primarily addresses, might be completely unfamiliar with. The underlying arguments and the moral issues that each standpoint is predicated upon emphasize the inherent subtlety and perceptiveness of a Roth who has never courted the politically correct to the detriment of a fully-shaped, complex portrayal of inconvenient circumstances. "At least one critic, Daniel Lazare, has noted Roth's courage in expressing these controversial sentiments 'full blast' and welcomes Roth's celebration, in 'Diasporism,' of the assimilationist impulse over the nationalist impulse" (Furman 650).

Indeed, one of the sensitive topics that the novel approaches from a variety of angles is that of the nature and requirements of Jewishness: what it is, who defines it, from which position and with what kind of entitlement. The

habitual rooting of Roth's protagonists is in the late twentieth century American Jewish community, "for whom the pleasures of assimilation are accompanied by the guilt of surviving and of increasing detachment from Jewish religion and traditions" (Shostak 750). This combination of alienation and repentance, estrangement and self-flagellation has been central to many of the main figures in Roth's writings. By what may initially appear as a merely symbolic change of (geographical) scenery, the writer enlarges the frame and introduces supplementary elements and allegiances.

Appelfeld's interview, for instance, tries to clarify the relation between fictional worlds and history, as well as the tension between the interviewee's personal experience and the ways in which trauma surfaces onto the written page: raw, unsparing, unadorned, "laconic to a point of unrewarding inscrutability" (Roth 72). Applefeld invokes the insurmountable ubiquity of the Holocaust and its lasting shadow over the lives of the survivors and their descendants. Thus, he voices one standpoint that invests the assimilated Jew with an unparalleled power of survival and reinvention of the self:

> Fate was already hidden within those people like a mortal illness. Assimilated Jews built a structure of humanistic values and looked put on the world from it. They were certain that they were no longer Jews and that what applied to 'the Jews' did not apply to them. That strange assurance made them into blind or half-blind creatures. I have always loved assimilated Jews, because that was where Jewish character, and also, perhaps, Jewish fate, was concentrated with greatest force. (Roth 73)

The impersonated Philip Roth finds himself confused and conflicted by this exchange. He thinks of Smilesburger, the Mossad agent who has kidnapped him to gain a spy for the Jewish state, while first posing as a generous donor. He realizes that, no matter how ruthless and obscure, many people have, in time, inscribed themselves into "a tradition of largesse that went back to the Rotschilds and beyond, staggering checks written out to Jews imperilled or needy in ways that their prosperous benefactors has either survived or, as they saw it, miraculously eluded against all historical odds" (Roth 73). Assimilation and/or philanthropy surface as potential ways of distancing oneself from the Jewish roots, atoning for the sin of not having fallen prey to the unnamable and, hopefully, unrepeatable Holocaust.

Roth's and Smilesburger's confrontation is the one between envy and irritation as to the ever-elusive advantages of the American Jewry. To the agent, the Diaspora Roth enjoys "the delightful luxury of the utterly transformed American Jew", whose liberation equals unaccountability in the eyes of the Israelis: "The *comfortable* Jew. The *happy* Jew […] The blessed Jew condemned to nothing, least of all to our historical struggle" (Roth 218). From such a perspective, one surmises that successful assimilation may be seen as escapism and betrayal, or as a model and aspiration for the Jews of Israel, tormented by the insurmountable burden of memory and (re)construction. Philip, however, hears an exaggerated victimization and a glorification of suffering in the perpetual wailing of the Jews, who use the rhetorical strategy of claiming superiority on account of their being "condemned to everything" (Roth 218).

The tension between such emotional baggages is so strong that it becomes understandable, as long as it is articulated by characters whose moral and political positions are equally authentic. They coexist within the paradoxical realm which revolves around the (un)reality of Israel as the nucleus of genuine Jewish identity. Philip Roth questions the very essence of the monolithical, unchangeable, unidirectional nature of Jewishness: he puts working versions of it on display and makes their voices as resonant as they are convinced of their absolute truths. In this context, equally relevant and thoroughly developed discursively is the perspective of a character who stands for the silenced other, seldom seen as authoritative in the ongoing dispute between nationalism and assimilationism: George Ziad, the Palestinian who had once been Philip's classmate in the United States, before returning to the territories occupied by Israel.

To Ziad, the "word-throwing Arab" (Roth 78), the perspective of Diasporism equals an official termination of Jewish domination upon his homeland. His idealization of the American Jew is as natural and sincere as it is deeply shaped by his own take on regional and world history. He praises the grace, elegance, education of the diasporic Jew that he has known in America, whom he has perceived as noble, open-minded, tolerant. Consequently, he places that experience in opposition with what he perceives as the ultimate evil. Marked by the doom that the creation of the State of Israel has brought upon his community and the evolution of Palestinian history, he resorts to persuasiveness via commonly-shared memories. He appeals to his former

colleague's sensitivity to intellectual arguments and the quite obsolete, though oftentimes convincing dichotomy of 'civilization' vs. barbarism'. His speech is an ongoing exclamation of both philosophical and practical outrage:

> The arrogance! What have they created like you Jews out in the world? Absolutely nothing. Nothing but a state founded on force and the will to dominate. If you want to talk about culture, there is absolutely no comparison. Dismal painting and sculpture, no musical composition, and a very minor literature—that is what all their arrogance has produced. Compare this to American Jewish culture and it is pitiable, it is laughable. And yet they are not only arrogant about the Arab and his mentality, they are not only arrogant about the goyim and their mentality, they are arrogant about you and your mentality. These provincial nobodies look down on you. Can you imagine it? There is more Jewish spirit and Jewish laughter and Jewish intelligence on the Upper West Side of Manhattan than in this entire country. (Roth 78)

6. Conclusions: Conscience as Guide

Once more, the author of *Operation Shylock* resorts to masterful ventriloquism in order to bring to the fore of his novel an impressive range of equally believable – no matter how disturbing – perspectives upon the convoluted matter that lies at the heart of his exploration: the search for authenticity – individual and communal, personal and public, literary, cultural, historical. It is, evidently, the depth and force of this narrative exercise which have triggered the amount of criticism addressed to Philip Roth: the individual whose private beliefs many thought to have surfaced in his writings, despite (or, in fact, because of) the variety of opinions he chose to integrate and illustrate.

Roth may have purposely created a certain amount of confusion and tested his readership by entitling his fictional work "A Confession". Nevertheless, there can be no doubt in the mind of the careful reader as to the literariness of the work per se. "The form of the book as 'confession' clearly raises the point that to represent 'untransformed' reality has ethical as well as epistemological implications - even though, by a contorted logic, it is a fiction that the facts are untransformed here" (Shostak 2000, 32). Thus, the author uses his imagination to sublimate and echo concerns that resonate trans-continentally, in the Jewish community at large, as well as within particular

sections of it. Smilesburger's shrewd and manipulative advice to the protagonist is "Let your Jewish conscience be your guide" (Roth 245). By the end of the book, it appears that the entire postmodern game serves a similar purpose: to activate not just the reader's empathic and analytical mechanisms, but also a deeply humane conscience, that goes beyond contradiction and polarization, into the realm of meaningful cultural alterity.

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Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*: A Novel for Our Liquid Times

Gönül BAKAY

1. Introduction

Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* (2004) is the story of a young Indian man, Arjun Mehta, who immigrates to America hoping to make his fortune there as a computer programmer. In our day and age, there are so many people like him chasing the so-called American Dream, searching for a better future for themselves. Riding on the wave of globalisation, many young people who are not pleased with the conditions of their native country immigrate to foreign lands hoping to make a living there. Despite his big hopes and grand ambitions, Arjun faces multiple challenges and his dream eventually turns into a nightmare. Like many other immigrants from the developing world, he suffers from poverty, discrimination, and loneliness in the so-called "land of opportunities". Drawing on the theories of the Zygmunt Bauman, this article examines the multifaceted impact of globalization on human lives and the fragility of interconnected systems in Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*.

Zygmunt Bauman offers the concepts of "liquid life" and "liquid modernity" as explanations of our contemporary period. He defines "liquid life" as "a kind of life that tends to be lived in a liquid modern society". "Liquid modern", on the other hand, "is a society in which the conditions under which its members act change faster than it takes the ways of acting to consolidate into habits and routines" (1). As Bauman further suggests, this is also a period of heightened uncertainty and complexity. "Extrapolating from past events to predict future trends becomes ever more risky and all too often misleading… In short: liquid life is a precarious life, lived under conditions of constant uncertainty" (1-2). Drawing on Bauman's observations, I would argue that

Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* offers a memorable illustration of "liquid life" in a "liquid modern" society. In this sense, the novel does not simply depict the trials and tribulations in the life of a naïve young man, but it also provides important insights into the ways in which people and societies interact in an increasingly globalized and complex world.

As a work of speculative science fiction, the novel could also be read as a satirical "cautionary tale" that shows how the seemingly solid world system which rests on the pillars of advanced technology and complex interconnected networks is, in fact, incredibly fragile. This theme of technology as a double edged sword - with its potential hazards as well as benefits - is complemented by an equally powerful critique of social inequalities engendered or exacerbated by the unevenness of globalization. The famous sociologist Anthony Giddens defines globalisation as "the intensification of wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (64). As the novel successfully illustrates, a more globalized world is not necessarily a more peaceful or harmonious world, especially if taking in consideration the socio-political inequalities on the ground. Through the story of a protagonist from the developing world whose "hacking" leads to the collapse of global networks, Kunzru also shows that in a world characterized by fluid boundaries no one is safe.

2. Caught Up in the Grip of Liquid Modernity: Arjun Mehta

We live in a world of interconnected information technology that has revolutionized all realms of contemporary society. In his famous *The Condition of Postmodernity*, David Harvey elaborates on the concept of "time space compression" and observes that the capitalist process "so revolutionizes the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how to represent the world to ourselves" (240). Literature undoubtedly plays a very important role in not only reflecting the spirit of the times but also in terms of offering alternative representations of our liquid modernity. Within this context, Hari Kunzru's novel is a representative example of world literature that has been increasingly dealing with subjects

such as globalisation and socio-cultural inequalities against the background of rapid technological change.

According to Angelo Monaco:

> The transnational Indian novel in English exhibits a critique of capitalism and unveils the complexity of a world dominated by mass culture and surveillance systems … Kunzru's novel can be said to engage with larger global questions, controversially featuring the computer virus as a vector capable of relocating affective, ethnic, and economic affiliations. (355)

Drawing on Monaco's observations, I would argue that the novel does indeed pose a very strong critique of the contemporary world order also by portraying Arjun as a remarkably sympathetic character whose agency as a "hacker" disrupts and destabilises the global system.

Arjun's (increasing) agency and his development as a character should also be situated within the context of authorial intent. As a British writer of South Asian descent, Hari Kunzru is profoundly interested in questions of identity in the context of the ever shifting boundaries of an increasingly globalised world. In *Transmission,* he particularly explores "the formation of identity and questions of individual agency in regimes of exploitation and control" (Childs and Green 89). Whereas Arjun is portrayed as a hapless victim of circumstances beyond his control in the first half of the novel, he eventually finds ways of empowering himself and resisting the system. By the end of the novel, Arjun is hailed by many as a "hero" who has effectively challenged what Childs and Green call "regimes of exploitation and control" (92).

Arjun Mehta is a gifted and hard-working computer programmer from New Delhi who moves to Silicon Valley to make his fortune there. He is very much infatuated with Leela Zahir, a Bollywood film star and enchanted with the world of Bollywood cinema. Arjun can be considered a romantic hero because he is in search of true love and sincere relations with people. He initially gets a job at Virugenix, a Washington state company specializing in antivirus software. However, to his great and ever increasing dismay, he is shocked to see that the conditions in America are, in fact, the opposite of what he had hoped and expected to see. He unfortunately ends up living in a cheap neighbourhood and making half of what he originally expected. When Arjun told his family of his decision to go to America, the whole family gave him

farewell parties, hoping that he would make his fortune there. Terrified of disappointing his family and all his loved ones, Arjun keeps the dire circumstances of his life a secret and continues to believe that through hard work and determination he will eventually achieve success.

While still in India, Arjun was interviewed by Sunny Srinivasan who told him that if his CV was real, he would be given a job to start with and eventually become really rich. Sunny assures Mehta saying: "Boy, good programmers like you are gold dust over there (America). Everyone knows American college students are only interested in cannabis and skateboarding, right? You leave it with me. If you are telling the truth, you're going to be taking the dollars just as soon as we get you on a flight"(Kunzru 4). Sunny can be seen as one of the many representatives of the middlemen who benefit from the system. He does not seem to have any real concern for the wellbeing of the young people he finds jobs for. He seems to be solely interested in making his profit. Encouraged by these words, Arjun continues to dream big without giving a thought to the possibility that he may fail and/or get disappointed.

One can assume that Arjun's personality may have played a major role in his later disillusionment with life. He is portrayed as an introvert who does not really understand the feelings of the others; neither is he particularly close to his family. On the other hand, his decision to leave his country to settle in America looks like a betrayal in the eyes of some people, especially to the owner of Indus Fancy Products PVT, Mr Khan:

> There is the matter of loyalty. And the matter of patriotism. Who has trained you to do this work? India. Who has provided the schools? What do you think it means for you to take yourself abroad, instead of using your talents for the good of the nation? (29)

Indeed, Arjun is a romantic at heart who falls head over heels in love with Leela Zahir, a newly emerging Indian film star, after seeing her in a film called "Naughty Naughty, Lovely Lovely": shortly N2L2. Arjun watches the film seven times and decides to change his life: "he had been expecting a lot (he had always liked Rocky Prasad's work), but sitting in the stalls of Aakash Cineplex he found more than he imagined possible: the film was no less that a call to change his life" (40). Dilip, the hero of the film, becomes his ideal and like Dilip, Arjun tries to change his life and become wealthy.

Unfortunately, even after a year’s struggle in America, Arjun finds out that his job at Databodies was not guaranteed at all. Instead of the 50,000 dollar contract, he would be earning only 500 dollars a month. Soon after he starts working there, he is befriended by a bisexual girl named Chris who takes him under her wing. Chris wants to help Arjun out of pity and sympathy and does not plan to have a serious relationship with him. But after they sleep together, Arjun assumes their relationship is serious. So when he is eventually made redundant, he turns to Chris for help. When she says that she can’t help him get his job back, he observes: “But you have to. It’ s me and you. We’ re together, that’ s how it is supposed to be” (117). Arjun’s perception of his relationship with this American lady shows that he is still mentally operating within the cultural frameworks of his home culture where relationships are more predictable. Although in this globalised world he can find job miles away from home, he cannot adapt easily to the cultural differences.

When Arjun is finally forced to accept that he cannot avoid being fired, he decides to create a virus that would infect the computers in his company, so that he can show up and save the day. In other words, his only aim in unleashing the virus is to eventually get his job back. But things get out of control and as the virus infects other computer systems, first the networks of the whole city and then the whole global network collapse. As a result, authorities start a manhunt for Arjun who is demonised as a cyberterrorist. Arjun becomes a victim of the law of unintended consequences.

3. The Computer Virus As a Disrupter/Connector in *Transmission*

It is interesting to note that the virus connects the stories of three very different characters whose lives would most probably have never intersected under normal conditions: Guy Swift, Leela Zahir, and Arjun Mehta. Leela Zahir is the famous Indian Bollywood star Arjun is infatuated with; he even names the virus after her. Guy Swift is the rich entrepreneur, the CEO of the company “Tomorrow” whose internet system collapses because of the Leela virus. So thanks to globalization the lives of these three very different characters become curiously intertwined.

Guy is a very different character when compared with Arjun and yet there appear certain similarities in their lives: both men are eventually marginalised,

both of their lives are jammed by the chaos that follows the spread of the virus, and both men try to find an ideal, romantic love, a perfect relationship in these very "liquid" times. As I have already suggested, their interpenetrating stories tie in with the main idea of the novel. In our globalized world we are all connected, whether we like it or not. Even people in the most remote places may seriously affect and influence each other's lives.

One of the major differences between Arjun and Guy can be found in the way they exercise "mobility". As his name implies, Guy Swift can travel freely to wherever he wishes whenever he wants thanks to his wealth and British passport. On the other hand, Arjun's mobility is controlled by powerful authorities. He cannot freely decide where he will work and live; he is portrayed as a powerless peon in the hands of rich powerful groups. Arjun is a poor immigrant from a third world country. By contrast, Guy is a member of the "elite club" so to speak. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Guy believes Europe should be more strict in its immigrant policy and "only the select few" be allowed to immigrate to European countries. It is also ironic that a very strange turn of events later in the novel makes him question his earlier beliefs and presuppositions.

The novel also examines the phenomenon of the "hackers" in the fast paced age of the internet and sophisticated computer technology. The tech giant Microsoft investigated the reasons that motivate hackers and found that most hackers do it for fun, some others do it for personal gain, while others do it deliberately to cause harm to people. A great majority of hackers are loners who want to prove their "worth" to the world and to themselves.

As already mentioned, Arjun Mehta's "hacking" was not originally intended to be a criminal act. Neither was he motivated by a desire to disrupt communication and commercial networks. He himself states that he just wanted his job back. In the words of Philip Leonard: "What *Transmission* suggests is that both viruses and hacking interrupt not just the information economy but knowledge itself" (270). As one character in the novel observes: "we want to abolish the unknown" (Kunzru 297). From this perspective, Arjun's decision to unleash the virus is an attempt to empower himself in a world that has repeatedly made him small and vulnerable. He is clearly portrayed as a representative individual from the developing world who is routinely exploited and maltreated in the so-called First World and the reader

is made to sympathise with his desperate efforts to tip the scales in his favour. The fact that Arjun is presented as a good-natured and sympathetic character also suggests that Kunzru aims to draw attention and offer a powerful critique of the global socio-political and economical inequalities that shape our "liquid times". Moreover, the writer also uses the template of a hypothetical scenario to show that this global system which is based on structural inequalities leads to the perpetual suffering of "underdogs" like Arjun. However, the plot also reveals the very pertinent point that this profoundly unfair system is not only morally bankrupt but it is also unsustainable and dangerously fragile.

In the novel, "grayday" is the name given to the period when there is most noise in the global system and "there was heavy traffic across the border between the known and the unknown" (257). We are told that: "Grayday names a moment of maximal uncertainty, a time of peaking doubt. We have records of events which have not taken place. Other events took place but left no record. All that can be said with honesty is that afterwards there were absences, gaps, which never filled" (258). Throughout their evolutionary history, human beings have always tried to make the unknown known in order to feel more safe and secure. The cognitive tools they developed, the technologies they created were all employed to deal with the uncertainty created by the many unknowns that circumscribe human existence. However, this fundamental desire to know (and thus have the ability to control/contain) the unknown has become much more of a challenge during the period of "liquid modernity". As *Transmission* successfully shows, this era in which we live is not only remarkably fluid but is also profoundly characterized by high and ever increasing complexity. What makes the situation ironic is that, the advanced technologies people have developed to deal more effectively with complexity and uncertainty also render them more vulnerable if a glitch occurs in the system. In other words, the complex networks that comprise and sustain the global system *might* fall like a pack of cards. Grayday, as depicted in the novel, talks about this contemporary fear and reminds us that increasing complexity in liquid times might lead to an event that will create "maximum uncertainty". As human beings are wired to feel fear when facing encroaching uncertainty, it comes hardly as a surprise that grayday is described in apocalyptic terms.

In his *A Hacker's Manifesto*, Wark argues that "[t]o hack is to trouble the object or the subject, by transforming, in some way the very process of production

by which objects and subjects come into being and recognize each other in their representations. To hack touches the unrepresentable and the real" (qtd. in Philip 282). He further suggests: "Hacking effects a politics of unrepresentable, seeking not the smooth incorporation of minorities of race, gender and sexuality into the state's established structures, but parting from the deliberative rationalism that is central to artificiatory democracy" (qtd. in Philip 282). In case of a major hacking event the press usually offers various conspiracy theories for public consumption. Who has created the virus? Was it an underground network or a foreign country? What will be the extent of the damage created? In the presence of so many such questions, people naturally feel increasingly uneasy and stressed out. Kunzru depicts this state of anxiety, panic and disbelief with the following words: "the Colorado state government sent a message to Washington asking whether it had reason to believe the country was under cyber attack. Washington replied in the negative, but after hurried consultations, the denial was rescinded, and the President's spokesman described the administration's assessment as 'pending'" (145). As these words prove, the activity of hacking causes a disruption in power relations whereby the global superpower is quite literally "hit" by a struggling young man from the developing world.

As I have already suggested earlier, the novel does not only tackle topical subjects such as contemporary politics, globalisation and technology but it also shows how human relations are transformed during these profoundly "liquid" times. In this sense, "romantic love" (with all is inherent pitfalls) is another theme the novel examines through the storylines of its central characters. It is important to acknowledge how the lives of these two very different characters, Arjun and Guy, are entangled with the myth of romantic love. Since everything is rapidly moving and changing in the period of liquid modernity, both men seek to stabilize their lives by leaning and holding on to an emotion that is powerful and solid. But unfortunately, they deal with women who are not right for them since in both cases their love is not reciprocated.

Guy's girlfriend, Gabriella, first decided to be with him because she was lonely in a new city and wanted something solid in this frightening world. However, as the circumstances of her life changed, she started to feel that she did not want to be in this relationship anymore:

> These days, Gaby was hearing that voice again the one which told her to get out, to smash up all the emotional chairs and tables so there would be no going

> back, so she could tear down this version of herself and start again. … Maybe, she thought, it wasn't her. Or even him. Maybe it was the city, which had gone bad. There was a sourness about, an aftertaste of fear. (147).

Gaby's turbulent mind space proves that changes in the environment are manifest in the emotional states of people. Bauman refers to this type of fear as "derivative fear":

> a steady frame of mind that is best described as the sentiment of being *susceptible* to danger; a feeling of insecurity (the world is full of dangers that may strike at any time with little or no warning) and vulnerability (in the event of dangers striking, there will be little if any chance of escape or successful defence; the assumption of vulnerability to dangers depends more on a lack of trust in the defences available than on the volume and nature of actual threats). (2006, 3)

Arjun Mehta's love for Chris is similarly misplaced. Although he is very far away from India, his mind remains shaped by the norms of his home culture. Hence, he assumes that he and Chris are lovers after they sleep together although Chris actually sleeps with him to help him overcome his loneliness. Arjun believes having sex is a sure sign of love and devotion whereas Chris does not even fully understand why she slept with him. Arjun asks: "Chris, why did you have sex with me?" (118). Chris answers: "I don't know Arjun, I just did. It was a bad idea" (118). The misunderstanding between them, and the apparent discrepancy between their cultural paradigms, is clearly reflected in the following conversation. When Arjun says: "you are supposed to love me", Chris bluntly answers: "1 am sorry but I don't know what to say to you. It's not supposed to be anyway. Things are what they are. This is just how it is" (118). Coming from a very traditional society, it is quite impossible for Arjun to grasp and process the coldness and carelessness of this American girl who can treat physical intimacy as a form of recreational activity. The rift between himself and Chris makes Arjun feel even more depressed and contributes significantly to his gradual mental breakdown.

In *Liquid Love*, Bauman observes that "getting sex" is

> like ordering a pizza… now you can just go on line and order genitalia. Flirting and making passes are no longer needed, there is no need to work hard for a partner's approval, no need to lean backwards in order to deserve and earn a partner's consent, to ingratiate oneself in her or his eyes, or to wait a long time, perhaps infinitely, for all those efforts to bring fruit. (2010. 22)

Drawing on this observation, it is possible to suggest that sex has become yet another thing to be consumed and discarded at will. The easy access to sex and the availability of an almost infinite variety of choices, particularly in the advanced capitalist countries of the West, has also led to a significant transformation in romantic relationships and perceptions of intimacy. In some cases at least, real emotional intimacy is not even considered to be a prerequisite for getting physically close and this is culturally acceptable in many western countries. In this context, Chris' attitude towards male-female romance is very liquid and thus, in tune with the spirit of the times. Arjun, however, is rooted in and shaped by a culture that is certainly not as modern or "liquid" so he does not operate within similar cultural paradigms. Chris's and Arjun's different cultural templates and presuppositions implicate the way they see relationships and largely account for the misunderstanding and miscommunication between them.

As I have pointed out, the famous sociologist Zygmunt Bauman refers to our current historical period as "liquid modernity" in his seminal book *Liquid Fear*. He uses this term when referring to the:

> current speed of changes taking place in our everyday reality, linked with the constant movement, constant *flow* of people, goods and information on an unprecedented scale, which results in an inability to preserve stable forms of social life and frequently individual life: a condition in which social forms … can no longer (are not expected) to keep their shape for long, because they decompose and melt faster than the time it takes to cast them and once they are cast for them to set. (2006, 68)

The waves of immigration fuelled by globalisation are widely perceived to be a destabilizing force, especially in the West, the favourite target of most immigrants. The countries, on a broader scale, and the individuals, on a private scale, fear the destabilizing threat of the "outsider" who represents the threat of the unknown. Arjun is an immigrant worker, hence he is suspected of all kinds of illegal activities. As far as Guy Swift is concerned, the conditions are very different; he is not an immigrant, yet when he is accidentally thought to be one, he ends up being exposed to many unpleasant experiences like most immigrants. Devastated by this trauma, he becomes an outcast and his whole world crumbles down.

Guy is deeply aware of the fact that no one is to be trusted in the world of business. Guy is set up by Yves, his friend from the company. On the pretext of helping him, Yves makes him get drunk and arranges a girl for him to spend the night with. Yet, in reality, he gets him entangled with a group of outlaws. After getting sober, Guy is hauled into a police car running through Brussels streets. All in all, his experiences point to the fragile world of globalization and risk.

In a "liquid" world, the individual fears for his life, nothing is predictable. As Bauman suggests: "Fear is at its most fearsome when it is diffused, scattered, unclear, unattached, unanchored, free floating with no clear address or cause; when it haunts us with no clear visible rhyme or reason when the menace we should be afraid of can be glimpsed everywhere, but is nowhere to be seen" (2). It is certainly this hazy kind of omnipresent fear that shapes the atmosphere of the novel. In the words of Tüzün:

> *Transmission* shows that increasing connectivity has rendered our system fragile mainly because we seem to lack the capacity to manage the growing complexities of a rapidly evolving global system. In doing that, the novel also reveals our increasing failure to account for the spillover or systemic consequences of our individual atomized actions. (1035)

As I have argued throughout, *Transmission* is a very engaging thought experiment about the negative turn our "rapidly evolving global system" might take. The novel also successfully shows how the "individual atomized actions" of Arjun Mehta trigger a staggering chain of events with far-fetching consequences. Arjun's agency interacts with various other forms of agency. It is, in other words, the complex interplay of a multitude of atomized actions that fundamentally shape the flow of events.

Conclusion

All in all, the intriguing story of Arjun Mehta offers many insights into our contemporary world. Throughout the novel, the reader is encouraged to meditate on a variety of current issues by considering the alternative perspectives offered by an international cast of characters. What makes the book's message even more compelling is that the world presented by Kunzru comes across as very familiar. We recognize this world as very similar to our own and thus feel a heightened sense of tension and unease as this world

crumbles down. Although *Transmission* offers a fictional scenario, it is the kind of scenario that *could* take place anytime. Perhaps, this is yet another reason why we should pay careful attention to the novel's message and heed its warning.

To conclude, one could argue that in our globalized world where place and distances have lost their meaning, our jobs, lives and relationships are fluid; anything and everything can happen to disrupt the peaceful flow of our lives. As *Transmission* makes abundantly clear, our contemporary period may indeed offer more affluence and comfort thanks, largely, to technological progress yet it is also a period of unprecedented risks. Hence, our globalised world is still haunted by an ancient spectre: the fear of the unknown…

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Civil Rights and the Identity Struggle in George Takei's *They Called Us Enemy*

Raluca-Andreea PETRUȘ

1. Introduction

Deeply rooted in the historical events it re-presents, George Takei's graphic memoir, *They Called Us Enemy,* encompasses a graphic content and a written one and conveys a personal and collective insight into the war-driven context of the 40s. His novel illustrates how one's Japanese ethnic ancestry becomes a non-desirable characteristic and alters one's status in the United States of America. Following a tradition of Japanese American confessional writing, a first-person narrator, in the character of George Takei, depicts a timeline of events that spreads from the pre-war period and bombings of Pearl Harbour until the present time illustrated from the perspective of a deported Japanese American.

This shift of status comes as a result of the armed conflict between Imperial Japan and the United States. Its outcome leads to viewing those of Japanese descent as *personae non gratae* in the US, their homeland, be they immigrants or citizens born on American soil. The change of status mentioned above affected part of the Japanese Americans living in the US at the time of Pearl Harbour. This ethnic group numbered 120,000 people, with the mention that a third of them were immigrants, while two thirds were American citizens (see Mineo).

Through its graphic depictions and narration, the novel illustrates how the Japanese Americans become *personae non gratae*, scapegoats or means of achieving political, economic and personal ambitions of the authorities and civilians. In an environment dominated by the rhetoric of division and discrimination based on one's ethnic ancestry, non Japanese Americans are confined in deportation camps until the end of WW II. Simultaneously, anti-Japanese American and pro-Japanese American groups polarise (around pre-conceptions) and display a behavioural trait known as *tribalism*. A definition of

the term *tribalism* comprises two possible meanings: "the state of existing as a tribe, or a very strong feeling of loyalty to your tribe" and "a very strong feeling of loyalty to a political or social group, so that you support them whatever they do" (*Cambridge Dictionary*). The former meaning refers to one's predisposition to develop a kinship towards groups and implies a sense of subtle opposition towards those who are different or who oppose their group's supported values. In addition, the latter meaning showcases how members can become fervent supporters of their selected kin, regardless of their actions, and, in extension, are predisposed to avoid assessing their actions critically.

Amy Chua develops upon this social behaviour of tribalism referring to the twentieth-century and contemporary US politics, along with the general demeanours of US groups. Her view of *tribalism* upholds the two perspectives presented above and insists on the dangers of the tribal groups' radicalisation, the discrimination and hatred cultivated towards *the other*. Chua warns about the dangers of pursuing this "destructive, fracturing tribalism" (166), which threatens the safety of *all groups*. In other words, a divisive type of politics leads, paradoxically, to shared, long-term consequences.

Although the Japanese Americans had their civil rights threatened and denied, a lash of hatred oriented at them from the civilians and the authorities lights up a yearning of Japanese ethnics for belonging to a group that shares their values. As such, people of Japanese ancestry experience identity dynamics which surface and resurface in diverse contexts: some characters re-live segregation (the Issei generation) and other forms of discrimination, while some, i.e. the younger generations of Nisei and Sansei, experience deportation and racism for the first time. While the American institutions turn away from the plight of the not-guilty Japanese Americans, the ones discriminated against find themselves in a state of in-betweenness regarding one's national identity, way of life, and ethnic heritage.

As defined by Du Bois, *double consciousness* grasps this sensation of in-betweenness and reveals a state that affects one's mental perceptions under the form of an "impact of prejudice, in situations of social interaction" (xiii). Du Bois applied this theory of double consciousness and the *veil of prejudice* to the situation of the Blacks in America and insisted on how the gaze of white people affected them in terms of personal perception. The veil covered the views of Black men so that they could only be conscious of themselves and their actions from the gaze cast upon them by the white Americans, including the assumptions

and (baseless) judgements. What is more, this double-consciousness is categorised as “two-ness” and described as such:

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (8)

By adapting Du Bois’ concept of double consciousness and the veil of prejudice to the Japanese American internment phenomenon, the study will follow two directions of analysis. The former one includes the perception of Japanese Americans who regard themselves as the image projected upon them by the white Americans (along with their acceptance of/resistance to the image projected upon them). The latter one includes the (un)acceptance of their two-ness *per se*, i.e., Japanese *and* American.

2. Denied Civil Rights: *Alien and Non-alien* Enemies

To introduce the reader into the world of deportation camps, the front cover of the graphic novel portrays a series of Japanese American characters, all gathered up in an organised queue. One American soldier, armed with a rifle, guards the line and faces forward, with the camp behind him, as if he were looking at the readers. His eyes, indistinguishable, are hidden by black ink. Other than the soldier, the only character whose face is distinguishable is that of George Takei, aged 4. George, carrying a suitcase, waits in line to enter a deportation camp surrounded by barbed wire. He does not look forward, as other Japanese Americans do, but backwards, gazing intently at the readers: the readers are now part of the story itself; they are spectators to the unfolding of events, with George leading the string of recollections.

On top of the front cover, the reader can notice that barbed wire pierces through the novel’s title, *They Called Us Enemy*. Its linguistic and semantic touches double the aesthetic value of the presented title. In other words, the title is revelatory in expressing the conflict dynamics of the 40s and, from the very outset of the story, the veil of prejudice is cast upon those of Japanese ancestry. The *enemy* label given to Japanese Americans by US leaders and part of the population (white Americans) reveals that immigrants from Japan and their children, American citizens, are *foes* of the US. This label gains *legal*

support and enforces the idea that the ones who look like their adversaries or share a common ancestry with Imperial Japan are, in fact, *enemies,* regardless of their non-involvement in the attack on Pearl Harbour.

This perception affects more than one hundred thousand people and three generations: Issei, Nisei and Sansei. In terms of civil rights and citizenship, one-third of the 120,000 deported people were *Issei* (such as George's father, Takekuma Norman Takei), i.e. immigrants from Japan, and could not become US citizens as they were not born on US soil. The option to become naturalised was not available for those of Japanese ancestry (see Nationality Acts 1790-1890). On the other hand, the children of the Issei, namely *Nisei* (second-generation Japanese Americans, such as George's mother, Fumiko Emily Nakamura) and *Sansei* (third-generation Japanese Americans (such as George Hosato Takei, his brother, Henry, and sister, Nancy Reiko) were two-thirds of the deported Japanese Americans and they are citizens who gained this right at birth.

To clarify, according to the *Fourteenth Amendment* to the *US Constitution* (U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1), the US cultivates a policy of *jus soli*, and not a policy of *jus sanguinis*: as such, citizenship is awarded at birth, and not through parents' ancestry or naturalisation. In other words, "being American is not a matter of ancestry, but rather a matter of connection to the land, and of being bound by a shared constitution" (Chua 28). Although the Constitution guarantees one's birth right citizenship (through the *Fourteenth Amendment*) and the right to a fair trial and the benefit of the doubt (see *the Sixth Amendment*), US institutions do not enforce the two constitutional rights. Instead, their actions uphold politics of exclusion.

The legal document which weighed the most in upholding the *enemy* label and cancelling the rights detailed in the Constitution was *Executive Order 9066*. After President Roosevelt signs EO 9066, people of Japanese ethnicity suffer a change of status; they become *alien enemies* and *non-alien enemies*. After EO 9066, authorities issued civilian exclusion orders, and Japanese Americans would soon be deported from their homes on the West Coast to deportation camps or federal prisons.

As the US pursues their armed conflict with Imperial Japan, authorities and civilians at home extend the *we vs. they* dichotomy, and they revolt against those of Japanese ancestry who reside in the US. Authorities do not include those of Japanese ancestry in the category of Americans, as their ancestry presumably does not allow them to fully become Americans. As they are "non-assimilable" (Takei 21), they have no claim of civil rights, which are only

accessible to people who fit their conception of *rightful* Americans. As such, the panels, narration and speech bubbles support the previous claim and display how official speeches authored by politicians and other authorities enforce an intense pursuit of tribal behaviours exhibited by civilians (as depicted in Takei 17, 20-21, 173).

This discriminatory approach leads to a dehumanisation of the Japanese Americans and the emergence of a severe anti-Japanese feeling. As authorities read call to arms manifestos against Imperial Japan, white Americans destroy properties owned by Japanese Americans and exclude people from *their* neighbourhoods by supporting a series of slogans, written on banners and signs, such as: "JAPS KEEP MOVING. THIS IS A WHITE MAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD" (173), "LOCK UP THE JAPS", "LOCK THEM UP", "NO JAPS" (see Takei 20-21), "SAVE CALI[FORNIA] FROM THE JAPS", "DOWN WITH THE JAPS", "SLAP THAT JAP" (173). All the messages of these banners add up more layers to the veil of prejudice. In addition, they share the following features: the denial of their non-implication in sabotaging plots, the violent and divisive semantics, the use of the derogatory term "Jap" to address Japanese Americans.

Japanese Americans are denied other civil rights, as some would have their finances frozen and their farming means of production confiscated (see Takei 24-25). What is more, Takei illustrates that before Japanese Americans are forced to relocate and leave their homes, they sell their belongings at a steal price and close down their businesses (see Takei 24).

In given cases, the anti-Japanese rhetoric and the derogatory term "Jap" are directly enforced in daily-life interactions. In one circumstance, a white American man wants to buy an object from a store owned by a Japanese American and uses this term to negotiate. Four panels are dedicated to this scene. The first one sets the context: the shop closes in one day, so a final sale occurs. Upon refusing to buy the desired object at its requested price of two dollars, the white civilian offers ten cents for it (see Takei 24). In other contexts, negotiating one's goods is part of regular interactions between seller and buyer, but, in this case, the white civilian claims a position of power and uses the derogatory term "Jap" to depreciate the seller's products and, more importantly, to enforce the inferior status of the seller and to benefit from the seller's misfortune and imminent deportation.

The authorities' lack of action supplements the anti-Japanese American rhetoric, which they have been exhibiting previously: authorities refuse to admit that people of Japanese ancestry did not partake in anti-American

manoeuvres. US leaders deem the Japanese Americans as untrustworthy and overlook the lack of evidence in this sense (see Takei 21): no benefit of the doubt was in discussion. The significance of this approach is that Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps to protect the United States from any spies and saboteurs allegedly, as specified in Executive Order No. 9066 (Roosevelt). Consequently, regardless of no evidence that Japanese residents of American-born citizens with Japanese ancestry were plotting against the US, the President, the Secretary of War and the Military Commanders deported those of Japanese heritage to internment camps.

The narrative voice reiterates the idea of non-engagement of the Japanese Americans on behalf of Imperial Japan, and Takei stresses the idea that officials refused to analyse the consequences of these injustices committed against the Japanese Americans. Amy Chua's theory of *tribalism* grasps the dynamics of the 40s in certain conflict situations, as groups and their representatives instinctually go against *the other* and enforce tribal politics of divide and conquer. One such voice who uses a divide and conquer type of politics is Attorney General Warren (see Takei 25). Takei offers additional details on Earl Warren's approach regarding the Japanese American issue and states that Warren's motivations are personal and political: "The absence of evidence was the evidence" (25). The paradoxical semantics of this formulation exhibits the absurdity of the situation and the cognitive bias put into practice by officials when taking political action.

What is more, Takei puts forward a declaration for the Congress authored by Fletcher Bowron, lawyer and mayor of Los Angeles. Bowron, an advocate of the non-assimilable traits of Japanese Americans, mentions that "blood will tell", hinting at the inborn nature of Japanese Americans to betray the US and hold an alliance with Imperial Japan (see Takei 21). Bowron, a leading figure in support of the deportation camps, pleads for cautiousness against what he labels as a possible "another Pearl Harbour episode" (21). In addition, his discourse stresses the idea that the Japanese Americans do not have claims to their desired Americanness: "They are Japanese and nothing else. Regardless of how many generations may have been born in America" (21). Senator Tom Steward follows the same rhetoric and labels Japanese Americans as non-assimilable and imminent enemies: "There is not a single Japanese in this country who would not stab you in the back" (111). Steward never refers to them as Japanese Americans (such as other anti-Japanese

American authorities): by excluding *American* from their group identity, the *we vs. they* rhetoric is perpetuated, and tribalism is reinforced.

Upon evacuation orders, the Japanese Americans arrive at deportation camps, and tribalism re-emerges: one group closes another group behind barbed wires. Deemed as a threat, Japanese Americans are supervised by white American soldiers. As these events unfold, Takei depicts his perception of the deportation while at a young age. The novel portrays how the innocent react to this situation by employing a dialogue between George and his father, Takekuma, who tells him that they will go on "vacation" (38). While Takekuma's panel shows an absent gaze and a worried face, George's panels are beaming with light. The child's eyes become more prominent than previously depicted, showing excitement about the upcoming adventure. The contrast indicated the awareness-unawareness tandem of the unfolding situation, as the Takei family and other Japanese Americans travel via train to Rohwer, a deportation camp in Arkansas. A glimpse of suspicion arises on George's face as he notices other passengers crying in the train (see Takei 39).

These assumptions and prejudices infringe another civil right, that of fighting for their country or continue being soldiers. While Japanese Americans wish to join WW2 or continue their efforts on behalf of the US, their intentions meet a refusal from US authorities and a mandatory return of military equipment: the US continues its politics of tribalism as those of Japanese ancestry are deemed *personae non gratae*. The right to defend one's country remains restricted to people of Japanese ancestry until 1942, when *enemy aliens* could be drafted at war because of war casualties (see Takei 111-113).

The condition to participate in the armed conflict consists of completing what was known as the *Loyalty Questionnaire*. Here is Question 27 and 28:

> Question 27: Are you willing to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States on combat duty whenever ordered?
>
> Question 28: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance to any foreign government, power, or organisation? (Takei 115)

By using intertextuality and including accurate versions of Question 27 and Question 28, Takei enforces the novel's agency and historical accuracy. Along with this intended effect, the contents of these two interrogations unsettle deported Japanese Americans due to their double-edged semantics and ambiguous formulation. Question 27 implied that Japanese Americans (who had been deprived of rights based on unjustified ethnic discrimination) would face more discrimination and sent to fight in segregated combat units.

Question 28 implied that Japanese Americans, immigrants or citizens, had a presupposed allegiance towards other governments and foreign authorities (i.e. Emperor Hirohito).

Those who enrol and answer affirmatively are seen as *loyal Americans*: for the first time, their American identity is recognised by those in a position of power. Thus, the infringed civil rights and the given labels of non-alien enemy, respectively alien enemy, are challenged for the first time. On February 3, 1943, FDR declares that: "No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship. Regardless of ancestry" (Takei 113). Consequently, Japanese Americans are allowed to be drafted at war for the first time after Executive Order 9066. Although initiated as a war strategy rather than a reparation of injustice, this reinstated right allowed Japanese Americans to fight for their families. One group, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which was entirely composed of Nisei soldiers, managed to defend strategic points in the war and would be the most decorated unit of its calibre after World War II (see Takei 119).

While some authorities turn towards Japanese American help, others continue to pursue politics of tribalism. One influential public figure who discriminates against Japanese Americans based on their ancestry is General John L. DeWitt, a supporter of curfews, limited mobility and deportation camps. DeWitt enforces the idea that "[r]acial traits make it impossible to separate the loyal from the disloyal" (DeWitt in Takei 26). In other words, a "Jap is a Jap. It makes no difference whether he is theoretically an American citizen, he is still a Japanese" (Takei 111).

This approach, a vivid representation of divisive tribal politics, and the fact that those of Japanese ancestry were still in camps led to other characters' visible refusal to shake hands with those who had deported them. Some refuse to join the US army, considering that their families are still in camps and sent to federal prisons (see 122). The label of *personae non gratae* still exists for Japanese Americans who refuse to answer the so-called Loyalty Questionnaire with a positive reply. As an act of resistance to the subtleties of Q27 and Q28, Japanese Americans replied *no* to both questions. Their negative responses have the *No-No*s (such as George's parents) transferred from Rohwer to Tule Lake, California, an imprisonment camp with a triple-wired fence and strongly militarised (see Takei 126). Their negative answers included them in the category of *disloyal*, as the questionnaire had the role of separating the loyal from the disloyal (see Takei 114-117).

Although Japanese Americans are refused the right to privacy, freedom of movement, and guarded at gunpoint by soldiers in deportation camps, some Japanese Americans rethink their options and reconsider the nature of wired fences. The fence, a symbol of the denial of their freedom, becomes a symbol of the Japanese Americans' safety for the ones enclosed at the correctional centre of Tule Lake. They perceive its confinement-protection duality and, paradoxically, Tule Lake becomes a shield in front of Anti-Japanese hysteria expressed by some white civilians, a reaction that presumably awaits them outside the fences.

Two particular panels which represent young George sitting in front of the fence show that children also feel the danger of the outside world. His facial expression changes and his body language expresses his worry as he pulls back from the fence and closer to the camp's interior. George's actions are supplemented by speech bubbles, which reveal an emphasis on the word "danger": "Going home...? If the fences were no longer there, we would be in danger" (152).

While the Japanese Americans fight on the battlefield, authorities want to trade (white) Americans captured by Imperial Japan for Americans of Japanese ancestry who can renounce their citizenship. Under *Public Law 78-405 (*also known as the *Renunciation Act of 1944)*, loyal Nisei must not be held in camps. Nisei face a tough decision as they are advised to renounce their American citizenship to keep the camp open: US authorities want to repatriate those who renounce their citizenship (Lyon). Once more driven into a corner by authorities, part of the Japanese Americans at Tule Lake gave up their citizenship and deemed it "worthless" (Takei 154), as its value did not help Nisei or Sansei in any manner. Fumiko, George's mother, renounces her citizenship to protect their family from the world outside of the fences.

Other authorities and public personas display a policy shift that contrasts with the anti-Japanese attitudes depicted at the novel's beginning. While at first, some authorities struggled to strip Japanese Americans of their Americanness, other authorities and representative personalities guard the rights of Japanese Americans and pursue correcting the injustices. Thanks to the help of Wayne Collins, a white lawyer who protected Fumiko's right, George's mother has regained her birth right American citizenship after a long trial.

George's reaction to this event, captured by a speech bubble: "I like when mama smiles" (163), sharply contrasts with the narration and panels on page 8. George does not notice the tears on his mother's face, and the Takei family are portrayed holding hands and smiling at each other. This contrast between

previous sadness and ulterior joy has another symbolic note: behind the Takei family, the panel illustrates Tule Lake background, indicating that Fumiko's regaining of her citizenship coincides with their family's possibility to leave the camp behind.

Considering the points developed above, it is clear that the enforcement of tribalism by the white Americans triggers some intricate identity dynamics in Japanese Americans. As they suffered from restrictions and denials of civil rights, the Japanese Americans had to struggle to define their identity and to cope with a feeling of guilt imposed upon them.

3. Pursuing Identity: Japanese Americans and the Quest for Redefining Americanness

As the war context and the removal of their civil rights bring about more changes at the level of one's consciousness, Japanese Americans feel betrayed by their homeland and birthplace and sparks of conflict, physical and mental, tend to arise before and after their arrival at deportation camps. They also tend to manifest tribalism, but their tribalism represents a means of resisting the opposition of the anti-Japanese American authorities and civilians, with scarce conflicts between one another. This tribalism is often enforced by the narrative voice that scrutinises the behaviour of authorities who do not critically assess the actions of Japanese Americans.

Consequently, Japanese Americans suffer an identity crisis in the form of a continuous struggle to reconcile what is Japanese with what is American while trying to counteract the anti-Japanese wave developing in the US. The Japanese Americans desire to be accepted as Americans, without renouncing their Japanese ancestry: one's purpose is "to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In his merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost" (Du Bois 9). As such, their inner struggles take the shape of double-consciousness and result from the pressure imposed onto them by external factors, such as authorities. These struggles are reinforced by non-Japanese civilians: "GET OUT!" (17), "No Japs!" (21).

Therefore, the conflict state of events amplifies the Japanese American identities: the Issei, the Nisei, the Sansei feel their Japanese heritage is challenged and their American heritage is denied. Conscious of both their heritages, the Japanese Americans have different reactions to the pre-deportation restrictions and the deportation itself: a silent but discontented acceptance, rebellion, or

tendencies towards radicalisation and tribalism (see 134). Other options of the Japanese Americans include: turning towards the Japanese Empire (as the US abandoned them) or renouncing their American citizenship as its value is lost because of *Executive Order 9066* and *Public Law 78-405*.

These reactions are illustrated in panels such as the ones from pages 134-135. As the Japanese Americans suffer from the veil of prejudice cast upon them by the white Americans and the labels of alien enemies and non-alien enemies, their reaction is to build up a strong bond with their Japanese ancestry and revolt against the conditions from Tule Lake, for example. The panels on page 134 show how the Japanese Americans shout cheers specific to Japanese warriors, such as "BANZAI" (143). "Banzai" is only part of the full version of the war chant "Tenno Heika Banzai", which means "Long Live His Majesty the Emperor" (Ruoff 17). This kind of tribalism is a response to the treatment imposed upon those who were declared alien enemies and non-alien enemies without any incriminating evidence: "If the U.S. government was going to treat them like the enemy … they were going to show them what kind of enemy they could be" (134).

Because of these outbursts, other Japanese Americans with no relation to those who had radicalised suffer consequences and are moved to federal prisons. Inside the Tule Lake camp, residents manifest tribal attitudes against each other. Through the use of derogatory language (such as "*inu*", which can be translated as *dog*), the Japanese Americans attack each other for their different political views: some vouch for giving up on the US, while others refuse to do so. These attitudes led to a degradation of the previously-displayed group cohesion, which helped Japanese Americans adapt to the conditions of internment camps.

The struggle between one's inclination to embrace the Japanese or the American manifests differently in immigrants coming to the US, *Issei*, and their children, *Nisei*, and the grandchildren, *Sansei*. Age is also a factor to take into consideration. At Rohwer and Tule Lake, where they stayed between 1942 and 1946, young Nisei and Sansei attended holidays and play games. For the first time, Young Nisei and Sansei encountered a Japanese Santa. Originally they knew that Santa could only be white (see Takei 107), others played games such as "War". Children were eager to play the role of the American soldier, not the Japanese one in the *Americans vs. Japanese* confrontation: their (unconscious) choice of role-playing displayed a sense of kinship towards their American heritage and way of life (see Takei 107).

The experience of deportation reinforced the cohesion of the Japanese Americans, both as a collective group and as families. By taking the Takei family as a reference, the parents tried to shield children from this discriminatory experience through the use of language. In the train scene (analysed in the previous section), Takekuma protects George by keeping his inner struggle hidden. The innocence of the children (George, Henry and Reiko and other unnamed episodic characters) is moving. The travel to the internment camp seems to them to be an adventure. In contrast, the adults are painfully aware of what is going on (see Takei 38-39).

Those who were aware of the situation, i.e. the older Japanese Americans, felt that the Anti-Japanese rhetoric and actions pushed forward a politics of division that would estrange Japanese Americans from the authorities, institutions and other fellow Americans. Even when they are allowed to leave, Japanese Americans distrust this announcement and are afraid of being betrayed by the US government (see Takei 154-155).

Even so, for older generations, this conflict sparks a desire to redefine Americanness: since their civil rights and identities are challenged through restrictions and confinement, the Japanese Americans feel a stronger desire to see beyond the veil of prejudice, remove it and prove that they are also Americans. The war and deportation context only strengthened their desire to prove themselves, attain what Du Bois calls "self-conscious manhood" (9), and reconcile their Japanese ancestry with their American heritage.

Acquiring the "self-conscious manhood" means to show that Americanness includes the Japanese Americans. A significant episode, from this point of view, is the Regiment 442nd that gained recognition for their heroic actions. After the war, President Harry Truman made this statement on July 15, 1946: "You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice – and you have won" (Takei 120). "Self-conscious manhood" is not an exclusive condition, only to be acquired by those on the battlefield, but it also applies to the people who accept the consequences of answering with *no-no* to Q27 and 28. The following quotation represents a commentary with a clear didactic purpose, focused on the readers: "They proved that being American is not just for some people. They all made difficult choices to demonstrate their patriotism to this country, even when it rejected them" (Takei 123).

Some displays of tribalism still lingered even after WW2 had ended and the Japanese Americans were set free. Now back to school, George experiences unpleasant interactions (and lack of communication and acknowledgement) on

behalf of his teacher, and the derogatory term "Jap" resurfaces: "That little Jap boy" (171). His teacher's approach reminds him of the internment experience and has effects on his consciousness and self-perception. George states that: "The guilt which surrounded our internment made me feel like I deserved to be called that nasty epithet" (172).

The solutions to such displays of behaviour appear in post-deportation times, throughout the novel's last pages, under the form of a dialogue between Takekuma and George, as a young adult. To avoid events such as the deportation of Japanese Americans, authorities and civilians alike should scrutinise abuses and support a rightful, participatory democracy (see 178) and not unsettling tribalism. One such action is Fumiko's reacquiring her citizenship and the reconciliation of her Japanese ancestry with her American heritage.

In extension, this continuous fight to redefine Americanness as a quality that is not restricted to a particular group shifts the tribalist rhetoric of divide and conquer to one of unite and conquer. According to Chua, "America [has developed] a national identity that transcends tribal politics, and identity does not belong to any sub-group" (166).

The argumentation illustrates the fact that the struggle of the Japanese Americans for their identity coincides with the recognition of this ethnic group's civil rights and citizenship. The war context amplifies their awareness of their two-ness and their own reconciliation with their condition as Japanese Americans. On the other hand, some renounce/deny one of the two elements of their identity, as they face the removal of rights and the tribalism of the US government.

4. Conclusions

The objective of this essay was to show how World War II and the phenomenon of the Japanese American deportation reshaped the civil rights and the identities of the Japanese living in the US. *They Called Us Enemy* presents many instances of political and social tribalism: predominantly, this attitude took shape because of the refusal of the US establishment to respect the unalienable rights of Japanese Americans, be they citizens of not.

The restrictions and the denial of rights affected the identity of Japanese Americans and took the form of complex social and political issues, such as discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, orchestrated by the state and some

white civilians) and the removal of the benefit of the doubt. In these circumstances, the Japanese Americans suffered because of the veil of prejudice cast upon them by anti-Japanese groups and they had to struggle in order to reconcile their double consciousness.

The novel's graphic content supplements the narration to make the beholder fully aware of the chain of events by contrast. The beholder's awareness contrasts with the unknowing younger characters who only manage to acquire knowledge of the subject as they grow older. *They Called Us Enemy* acts as a medium that allows the voicing of historical injustices through its individual and collective characters so as to inform and educate the beholder: the rigorous documentation and the use of intertextuality (under the form of texts taken from newspapers, laws, and political speeches) create subtle messages meant to be decoded by the reader.

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Restoring Difference: Reading Zimbabwean Contemporary Literature

Luiza CARAIVAN

1. Introduction

Zimbabwean literature written in English has been the centre of attention since Doris Lessing wrote about this part of Africa, which at the time was named South Rhodesia or Rhodesia (between 1923 and 1980). Michael Chapman's *Southern African Literatures* also drew attention to Zimbabwean literature, along with the literatures of Mozambique, Angola, Malawi, Zambia and Namibia, due to the fact that

> in the literature of all the countries, there is the shared experience of colonialism in its abrasive, economic form attendant on strong, permanent settler populations. A consequence is the large theme of oppression and liberation with people in Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa having had to resort to bitter struggles against intransigent, white governments. (Chapman 9)

In the second half of the twentieth century, writers focused on "urbanisation, where the old-versus-the-new or the rural-memory-versus-the-city- opportunity characterises forms of expression beyond any stronghold of language, race or nationality" (Chapman 10). However, issues related to migration, exile, the position of women in society or the status of the writer in Zimbabwe. are more common in the novels and the short stories published after 2010.

The present study examines the particularities of contemporary Zim literature focusing on three women writers whose texts draw attention to Southern Africa rather than South Africa and to a new area of the literatures written in English. NoViolet Bulawayo, Tsitsi Dangarembga, and Petina Gappah belong to the generation of writers who enter the silenced

communities of Zimbabwe and become the voice of African women and African communities that have been struggling with the legacy of the colonial rule for over half a century.

Although contemporary Zim literature is mainly based on diaspora, a phenomenon which is not recent for the relatively small body of Zim literature, there are some writers who have returned to their homeland and offer a perspective from within. The Zimbabwean diaspora narrative deals with topics that are similar to the large field of diaspora literature: longing for the homeland, the impossibility of return, the impact of displacement both on the individual and on the homeland, the trauma lived by the marginalized Other either in the host country or at home, in case they return, and last but not least accepting differences and the status of being the Other.

As far as the stories narrated by the characters are concerned, they are related to traumas existing in Zimbabwean communities, as years of wars, conflicts and economic crisis have left a deep scar, or to traumas that women experience after being raped or suffering a miscarriage due to physical abuse. As Irene Visser observes,

> Storytelling is itself a ritual means to heal from trauma because it connects past and present, drawing upon the ancestors and their sacred power to restore harmony and health. Postcolonial fiction […] demonstrates that trauma can be narrated with integrity. (251)

Numerous observers of postcolonial literatures underline the fact that postcolonial literary works "create fictional life-worlds in which the ambivalence of colonial land and economic injustices are exposed as potentially mutating and threatening the independent nation" (Nyambi). Petina Gappah's, NoViolet Bulawayo's and Tsitsi Dangaremba's novels or short stories are written in English, published in Great Britain or the U.S.A. and deal with immigration, relocation and assertion of womanhood in the context of reconciliation with a traumatic past.

2. Southern African multiculturalism

Numerous researchers have underlined the fact that English influences and is influenced by the indigenous languages and discourses from former colonies. Thus, the Anglophone African literary writings have been the centre

of attention for more than half a century and in the recent years Southern African narratives have put Zimbabwean, Zambian, Namibian, or Malawian literature on the map. English has become widely used in Southern African discourses, as it offers writers easy access to the publishing market and, at the same time, it offers readers around the world the possibility to meet indigenous beliefs, cultures and even languages due to the fact that African writings mix English with the writers' mother tongues (for example, Shona, Ndebele or Xhosa). As Edmund O. Bamiro notices:

> The pragmatics of English in African literature is thus concerned with how writers in African society have appropriated the English language and turned it to their own cultural and political needs. Many African writers have no choice but to use English, but in using it, they decolonize English and transform it to suit their African socio-cultural and political exigencies. (15)

One of the most prestigious African philosophers, Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, discusses the duality of modern African literatures, as writers seem to be torn between being authentically African rather than an external body that seeks to penetrate the Anglophone European literary tradition. The Congolese philosopher speaks about an "epistemological hiatus" that should be taken into consideration when dealing with African studies and he introduces three questions that apply not only to African philosophy but to African writings in general:

> What does it mean for the field of African studies? To what extent can their perspectives modify the fact of a silent dependence on a Western episteme? Would it then be possible to renew the notion of tradition from […] a radical dispersion of African cultures? (x)

Nevertheless, written literary discourses in English by African writers are not a "hiatus" in terms of African experience gained through African literatures written in English, as this "neo-African literature" (Mudimbe 180), should be read in the context of local multicultural discourses rather than be considered an appendix of English literature. Although there are many Africanists that separate the "'real' African from the westernized African" (Mudimbe X-XI), African writers challenge, and rewrite these discourses as a way of explicating and defining their culture, history, and being" (Mudimbe X-XI).

Moreover, Anglophone African literatures have been thriving in their diversity, they have always adequately integrated in African literary

discourses and nowadays they "rely on African languages and cultures for their literary expressiveness" (Andindilile 113).

Undoubtedly, Southern African literatures are multilingual and multicultural in a space where "the chosen medium of expression must concretely embody African experiences and negotiate through a multiplicity of discourses, languages and cultures in meaningful ways" (Andindilile 113). The use of the English language should not be regarded as an attempt to replace indigenous languages. Instead, writers should take advantage of "the language's role in facilitating communication in multilingual, multi-ethnic and multicultural African societies" (113) and use it as a vehicle for transmitting representations, beliefs, or principles from these multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multireligious nations to the entire world.

At present, the debate revolves around the question whether Southern African countries are multicultural societies or just societies with multiple cultures sometimes colliding, other times ignoring one another, or most of the times influencing one another.

It is a well-known fact that, when describing multiculturalism, researchers frequently refer to the diversity of cultures that form a nation. The common norm is that positive recognition and celebration of diverse cultures are implied in the description of the term, as societies should be based on the right of different groups to be accepted and respected. Although the norm is generally recognized, this does not mean that it becomes standard practice in everyday life. However, diversity in literature does not refer exclusively to ethnicity but to all gender, social, religious, or cultural groups that are perceived as the Other in a community. In Southern Africa, the English language "serves as a communication bridge in a world of much cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity" (Andindilile 33).

Furthermore, in this part of the world we cannot speak about national literatures, as in the case of European literatures. In a 1966 essay, Mohamadou Kane[1] (9) notes that African literature published in the second half of the twentieth century is meant to be read mainly by Europeans as only few African writers turn their work towards African communities. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Zim writers address both a non-African audience and the

[1] Mohamadou Kane, 1996, p. 9: "En effet, c'est à l'Europe que l' écrivain africain s'adresse avant tout."

African public, although English is widely used by Zim writers living in or out of Zimbabwe. Such writings underline the differences between African multiculturalism and the European one, in an attempt to restore differences rather than search for similarities. Kane also observes that the African writers "are condemned to surrender so that they can achieve the conciliation of elements that are apparently contradictory[2]" (Kane 13). This effort made by writers offers African literature "its hybrid character" (Kane 13) and, thus, "African literature will be stamped with the seal of cultural miscegenation" (Kane 13). This hybrid nature of African writings is generated by the numerous African realities (re)presented and African writings in English are characterised by plurality and heterogeneity[2].

3. Language and Identity

The writings of Petina Gappah, NoViolet Bulawayo and Tsitsi Dangarembga bring forward different female voices that challenge contemporary Zim narrative, "against the monolithic, authoritarian (and male) version of 'patriotic' history, by which the government defines Zimbabwe's past and present" (Veit-Wild).

The three Zimbabwean authors present and represent female characters inside and outside the African community, using their experiences as both insiders and outsiders of the Zimbabwean multicultural and multilingual society to construct alternative identities starting from the intersection of gender, race, class and language. Their novels and short stories are concerned with topics and issues that African feminism commonly addresses: victimhood and power, voice and silence, identity and language, family and culture, (re)presentation and perception.

Unlike South African writers who have always had the possibility to write and publish books not only in English but also in Afrikaans, Zulu or Xhosa, Zimbabwean writers (living in Zimbabwe or abroad) use English as main language. Zim writers also combine Ndebele or Sotho with English and

[2] "On peut imaginer les prodiges d'acrobatie auxquels l'écrivain africain est condamné à se livrer, pour parvenir à la conciliation d'éléments apparemment antichroniques ou du moins étrangers les uns aux autres. C'est cet effort, louable en tant que d'éploiement d'énergie considérable et vain par la médiocrité des résultats, qui confère à notre littérature son caractère hybride. C'est l' évidence même, cette littérature – et cela put constituer un élément fécondant – sera frappée du sceau du métissage culturel" (Kane 13).

their characters move between two languages: the ancient language - "the language of intimacy" and of their childhood, and English - "a language that we encountered in school" used by the new generation in search of an alternative identity (Peschel). As Bulawayo states in an interview, Zimbabwe is a space where language is alive and it is "an identity that comes from negotiating two cultures" (Peschel). In *The Book of Not*, Tsitsi Dangarembga includes a glossary of African words that are used in the novel and many of them do not have a fixed English translation: "*Sahwira* – extremely close friends, *Sadza* – staple food of stiff mealie meal porridge, *Unhu* – personhood, *Wekuchirungu* – people from European places" (Dangarembga "The Book of Not" 248-249).

Nigerian writer Obu Udeozo considers that "the English language facilitates…creativity impelled by the phantasmagoria of…native idiom. As an African, I endeavour to tame the English language and put it in my pocket" (21). All three Zimbabwean writers have tamed English, and their works are addressed mainly at European or American audiences.

3.1. Identity or the Power of a Given Name

In 2013 NoViolet Bulawayo attracted the attention of the literary community as her novel, *We Need New Names*, was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize. Not only does she choose to use a pseudonym that combines English and Ndebele (her real name is Elizabeth Tschele) but she also echoes the trend of giving children English names that reflect the situation of their birth, their personalities, and the tasks they undertake. The characters in *We Need New Names* bear English names instead of their Ndebele names: Mother of Bones, Mother, MotherLove, Forgiveness, Kindness, Darling, Destiny, Whiteboy, Bastard, Godknows and Bornfree. The eldest woman who takes care of children when Mother is away from the village is called Mother of Bones. The woman who supplies villagers with alcohol, gathers people in her shack and looks after the children who become parents at a young age is called MotherLove. As Michael Wines underlines

> In Southern Africa, a child's name is chosen to convey a specific meaning… Increasingly, however, those traditional names are bestowed not in Ndebele, Sotho or some other local language, but in English, the world's lingua franca. English names arrived with colonial rule, were further imposed by missionaries and, for some, became fashionable with the spread of Western culture.

Parents translate Ndebele or Shona names into English although they would not allow children to speak the coloniser's language at home. Christian names are rarely used, as the trend is to translate traditional names from Shona or Ndbele into English. The older generations perceive language as a visa for a new life their children may obtain: "the children of the land [...] leaving in droves. [...] Moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing - to all over, to countries near and far, to countries unheard of, to countries whose names they cannot pronounce" (Bulawayo 145). The name of the township that Darling and her friends inhabit is Paradise, the rich neighbourhood where they find food is called Budapest, whereas Detroit is called Destroyedmichygen by the child who struggles to learn English from her relatives in America.

We Need New Names tells the story of a girl, Darling, who observes the social and economic inequalities in her community which is, in fact, a small scale Zimbabwe, and who is finally sent by her family to Detroit, U.S.A. Darling struggles to understand the part she should play in the U.S.A. as she cannot return to her home country, and disappoint her family who has invested a large sum of money in her trip to the U.S.A. Darling does not find a solution for those who are torn between home and exile. When in Zimbabwe, she looks forward to escaping the slums and moving to the USA, whereas in Detroit she faces a crushing burden that her friends impose on her: "Why did you run off to America? Tell me, do you abandon your house because it's burning, or do you find water to put out the fire?" (Bulawayo 286).

Darling's identity is strongly connected to the place that she leaves behind, to her mother tongue that she does not use anymore and to her friends who cannot accept her decision. She feels stranded and she longs for her original home, but return would mean that it is impossible for her to have a second chance in the USA as her visa has expired. Exile is a synonym of hardship for the girl who is not able to speak the new language properly. The burden of the exile is multiplied by the feeling that her mother tongue becomes useless, not only for her but for her future children. Darling understands that the stories and traditions of her community have meaningful relevance only when transmitted in Ndebele, a language that she finds useless in the U.S.A. and that her future family can no longer understand, let alone use:

> And with our parents gone […], we have no home anymore, who would go to see that land we left behind? [Our children] they grew and we had to squint to see ourselves in them. They did not speak our language, they did not sound

> like us. […] We told them stories about our country, they did not beg us for stories of the land we had left behind. They went to their computers and Googled and Googled and Googled. (Bulawayo 248-249)

Moreover, Darling realizes that her identity changes through the prism of the languages that she speaks and that she fears would be lost if people replaced them with a universal language. The English names that children receive at birth in Zimbabwe are not perceived as a loss of traditional and cultural identity because they are mere translations of the Ndebele or Shona names. However, the Christian names that are imposed on locals by the coloniser mark the cultural dislocation of a large segment of Zimbabwe's population and a fracture between generations:

> we did not name our children after our parents, after ourselves; we feared if we did they would not be able to say their own names, that their friends and teachers would not know how to call them. We gave them names that would make them belong in America, names that did not mean anything to us: Aaron, Josh, Dana, Corey, Jack, Kathleen (Bulawayo 247).

Both people and places are given new names borrowed from a language that should lead to prosperity and good fortune, a language that represents the new order in the Southern African society that has fought a fierce battle to change the name Rhodesia (linked to the businessman Cecil Rhodes) into Zimbabwe (a name that translates from Shona as "houses of stones"): "Back in 1890s when Cecil Rhodes and his band of marauders established Rhodesia by taking over the fertile land on the Mashonaland plateau, they dumped the people who lived there in the places they called native reserves" (Gappah 59). Forty years after the English name of the country was replaced by the Shona name, Zimbabwe, Africans are turning to English names for their children due to the unstable political and economic situation of the country. Translating the traditional names into English is also reflected in the Zimbabwean diaspora narrative.

Petina Gappah's volume of short stories is named *Rotten Row*, the name of a street in Harare where the criminal courts are situated, a street which received its name during British colonization and which is called "roton'ro" by the locals (Gappah ix). Gappah also explains the next step in redefining Zim identities: "The illogical order of Shona slang names for English and sort-of-English first names means that [...] all Philips become Fidza, all Ryans Ridza, all Davids Divha and all Jonathans Jonso" (Gappah 15).

Various misunderstandings may occur because of "the limitations of the English language to capture fully the fetid inventiveness of the Shona imagination" (Gappah 61). Thus, a character named Chikwambo has to carry the burden of being called Goblin, which is the usual translation of this word into English "when in fact it is a combination of a familiar, a good luck charm and a sort of unpaid messenger" (61). Although English is one of the official languages in Zimbabwe and it is considered a means of communication used to provide access to a better life, the idea of the Africans willingly and voluntarily subjecting themselves "to the constricting confines" (255) of English and using the coloniser's language in the most intimate moments is completely rejected by traditional communities. Even writers or bloggers who use English on a regular basis, find it "particularly raw" to "write sex scenes and fantasies in other languages than English" (165). One of Dangarembga's characters uses English when he wants "to keep the matter more distant and clinical" (Dangarembga *The Book of Not* 188), while some seniors plan "to spend the entire evening trying futilely to turn back time by speaking Shona" (Dangarembga 169).

Since the 1970s the phenomenon of colonisation has been replaced by that emigration which raised the issue of how appropriate and beneficial is to adopt and adapt English within African communities. The role played by the English language has changed from being merely a means of communication to an identity shaper. It is no longer a tool utilized to understand the system imposed by the colonizer but rather an instrument by which an end will be achieved. The former colonized peoples seek to escape poverty, gain access to information that used to be the privilege of the colonizer and move into the coloniser's world. Access to knowledge is granted only to those who can use English: "English will come alive on her tongue and she will spit it like it's burning her mouth, like it's poison, like it's the only language she has ever known" (Bulawayo 198). Future generations have the possibility to redefine their identity by integrating English in African languages in order to emphasize that differences need to be restored, recognized, and reconciled instead of being blurred and rendered invisible or unreadable.

3.2. Acknowledging Difference

Tsitsi Dangarembga published her first novel, *Nervous Conditions*, in 1988 and the sequels to this novel followed in 2006 (*The Book of Not*) and 2018 (*This Mournable Body*). The 1988 novel is the chronicle of a young girl's childhood in

the 1960s, Rhodesia. Eighteen years later, *The Book of Not* follows Tambu (Tambudzai Sigauke) through her teenage years at the Young Ladies College of the Sacred Heart, and 12 years later, *This Mournable Body* finds her in her 30s, struggling to become a career woman in the postcolonial Zimbabwe of the twenty-first century. The trilogy could also be read as a small-scale history of Zimbabwe, as the changes in Tambu's country have a strong impact on her life.

Dangarembga is the Zim writer who left the diaspora and returned to her homeland so she could offer a perspective from within, although she mentions in a 2020 interview that she and her husband decided to return to Zimbabwe in 2000 because "at the time no one in Germany was interested in black narratives" (Dangarembga "Interview" 2020). In 2020, *This Mournable Body* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, attracting once again the attention of the literary world to Southern African literatures.

In *The Book of Not,* Tambu is enrolled at a private school. Although she spends most of her time at the College of Sacred Hearts, she is still strongly connected to her family and thus, her mother tongue marks the entire novel. Although English is the language spoken in the convent boarding school, during her most intimate experiences and encounters use African words. The glossary at the end of the book is meant for the Western reader, as Tsitsi Dangarembga underlines in an interview: "My intention was to put characters in a world that Zimbabweans recognise. It was inevitable that there would be there this interlinking between the characters in the novel and Zimbabwe as a country" (Swart).

Tambu seems to be exiled in her own country when she leaves her mother's village and enters the boarding school because she faces the same decision that Darling had to make, that is, improving the level of her English, changing her behaviour so that it fits the Englishness of the boarding school which, in her case, is not abroad, but in Harare. The clear advantage of this school is that "unlike other schools in areas where guerillas battled for independence, [it would not] be closed" (Dangarembga *The Book of Not* 6). Her mother calls her "wekuchirungu" (people from European places) when she is at home and asks her, "Can you white people eat mufushwa with peanut butter?" (7). At the boarding school, Tambu is sometimes allowed to be part of the white group, being considered "our other" by the girls who lead the group (101). This label appeals to her to such an extent that she starts thinking about differences and skin colour: "I was glad the Sinai boys suffered their fate because they possessed different colours! I was appalled at the very notion of

it, the idea that, like the worst of them, I was myself metamorphosing into a racist" (102). The search for a neutral identity that would allow the young girl to be considered part of the white group at school and part of the African group at home, with her family rarely has a positive outcome. Tambu tries to find a balance between the two worlds using "*unhu*, that profound knowledge of being, quietly and not flamboyantly; the grasp of life and how to preserve and accentuate life's eternal interweavings that we Southern Africans are famed for, what others now call *ubuntu*" (103), a philosophy according to which if every individual is well then all the others are well. Tambu's attempts to explain the changes in the Zimbabwean society using the concepts of *unhu* are futile because an individual cannot do something or be in opposition to what is generally understood, practiced, and accepted without any help:

> The thing about unhu was that you couldn't go against the grain on your own. […] What *unhu* prescribed for one who was moving against the larger current was to come to one's senses, realise the sovereignty of the group and work to make up for the disappointment. Then you would become somebody, as more *unhu* would accrue." (Dangarembga *The Book of Not* 164)

When Tambu moves out of the boarding school and understands that teaching is not a suitable profession for her, she also realizes that she has to become "the new Zimbabwean" who does not consider the *unhu*, "only [her] own calamities" (246).

This Mournable Body takes her through the new Zimbabwe, where she is no longer protected by the walls of the convent boarding school. She understands that rape and maimed bodies are still a reality that Zimbabwean society must confront even after the wars are over and she establishes a new goal: to reconcile the two worlds that form the Zimbabwean society. On the one hand, there is the capital city (the former coloniser's world) where she aims to become rich and famous, and on the other, there is her hometown where her family still lives (the former colonised world). Tambu also has to deal with the decision to leave Zimbabwe and become a European, namely "to break away from the implacable terror of every day you spend in your country" (Dangarembga *This Mournable Body* 70).

The problem is that Tambu is determined to use her education and the knowledge of the English language as a reward for her family that has paid for her studies. Tambu works for an agency that takes tourists to organized visits in Zimbabwean communities where they can be part of the local life and watch the African traditions. She understands that the best method to help her

mother's village and her career is to bring a large number of Europeans who are eager to spend money if they receive what they expect: another Zimbabwe. Similar to the city council which is "skillfully deploying avoidance strategies in preference to planning" (239), Tambu organizes a clean, colourful and joyful community instead of presenting the real community marked by poverty and the scars of past wars: "It is my pleasure to introduce you to this fabulously beautiful country, our own Zimbabwe, a world of wonders for you to sample and of course enjoy" (345). Under Tambu's supervision, the women in the village put up an entertaining, yet degrading show for tourists, as they have to wear clothes and beads that tourists expect to see, to dance for the tourists who need to get pleasant memories on their cameras. Tambu also has her mother, Mai, take part in the show not only for the money but also for the confidence that she inspires to the whole community. Unfortunately, the event takes a turn for the worse when Tambu's mother no longer accepts to be photographed as an exhibit: "that's what you think I am. Not a someone, but that I am whatever you want to put in your picture" (357). Mai's refusal to become "Madam Mother" (356) as one of the tourists call her, or a piece in a cardboard show may be read as the refusal of an entire community to become an Other that fits in with the European or American image of the African world. Although Tambu has to resign because the tourists did not receive what they had paid for, she finally understands the African philosophy "concerning the unhu, the quality of being human, expected of a Zimbabwean woman" (362). Both the Self and the Other need to be reconsidered in an effort to redefine otherness in terms of African experience:

> We had a self that was, and still is to some extent, part of a tribal structure. But this nation self was born in violence, and we haven't confronted that. […] we can't only point fingers at people in positions of authority because they grew up in families just like us. So, there must be something in the way we do things that results in that. (Dangarembga "Interview")

4. Conclusion

Diaspora narratives have always been regarded circumspectly in the authors' homeland due to the fact that writers who choose not to emigrate may suffer different forms of persecution or witness the poor economic and political conditions that their people have to endure or tolerate. As Jeanne-Marie Jackson underlines:

> it's not easy to be a Zimbabwean writer abroad: in addition to having to answer familiar questions about who speaks for whom, writes to whom, and by whom their books are published, writers in the diaspora have to negotiate citizenship from a distance. And the line between 'here' and 'there' is unusually blurry for Zimbabweans.

NoViolet Bulawayo, Petina Gappah and Tsitsi Dangarembga use English to write their novels and short stories, blending it with local idioms or untranslated/ untranslatable words or expressions so that they address both an African and a European or American audience. Taking into consideration the postcolonial situation in Southern Africa and the fact that all three writers have been educated in Europe, their writings are mainly addressed to a European audience who is extremely receptive to African authors. However, as Su'eddie Agema underlines:

> Thus, one discovers that whether an African work is written in strictly an African language or depicted in an alien tongue, there is no doubt of the commitment inherent in the penning down of the story that bestows on and in it the power of a unique literature that translates in the clearest of terms, the life and culture of a unique people, Africans.

The three Zimbabwean writers create women characters who are representative for the contemporary Zimbabwean communities. They balance the feminist discourse with the social and the political discourses in order to unveil female identities that have been covered, silenced, and ignored for over a century. Their writings not only address issues that are related to African feminism, but also problems that are specific to multicultural societies: the new foreign names that are given to the young generation, the impact of coloniser's language on individual identities, the impact of displacement both on the individual and on the homeland, the redefinition of otherness, or the reconciliation with past traumas.

Diversity and difference are essential matters for a country that struggles against the colonial inheritance and fights to develop its own body of literature.

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Ayn Rand in the Global World[1]

Kamila MIRASOVA

1. Introduction

Ayn Rand (1905–1982), the Russian-born American writer and philosopher, lived and created in the twentieth century, but the ideas from her literary works, like free-market economy and government controls, are still at the top of the economic and political agenda nowadays, in the era of globalization. Moreover, Rand's strenuous effort to popularize neo-liberal views during her lifetime contributed to the advent of this era.

Besides fiction (three novels, one novella, several short stories, plays and film scenarios), Rand is the author of seven books and of numerous articles. She gave several lectures on her self-made materialistic philosophy that she called Objectivism. Furthermore, Rand is related to the era of globalisation in still another way, which is explained by the noted Polish-British sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman in his final work *Retrotopia*. He mentions Rand in the context of nostalgia, which, as he asserts, has lately appeared on a mass scale as a reaction to the uncertainty, the instability, the unpredictability, the rapid and uncontrollable shifts, the arbitrary and the chaotic processes, by which globalization is characterized. Bauman argues that nostalgia discredits certain social institutions, makes people choose between safety and freedom, and results in the rise of egoistic feelings in the population. It is in connection with these problems that he talks of Rand. Thus, Bauman's criticism of Rand is based on her apologia of egoism. Within objectivism, Rand talks about the ethical idea of rational egoism. Its economic and political expression results in the ardent advocacy of unfettered capitalism. Analyzing the "Ayn Rand phenomenon",

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Bauman contends it wrong that academia continues to ignore Rand despite the fact that her ideas are becoming more and more popular.

Bauman's apprehension about the increase in popularity of Rand's ideas is confirmed by the statistics of her sales. According to the Ayn Rand Institute in Irvine, California, about 30 million copies of Rand's books were sold ("Ayn Rand Hits a Million... Again!"). Today Ayn Rand's *magnum opus Atlas Shrugged* (1957) is #53 in Contemporary Literature and Fiction Best-seller rank on Amazon ("Atlas Shrugged: Ayn Rand.").

Though not acknowledged as a philosopher by the academia, Rand's literary legacy has been studied rather closely, mainly by American researchers. In 2009, two biographies, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* by J. Burns and *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* by A. Heller, appeared. Heller focuses more on the details of Rand's biography, while Burns elicits the evolution of Rand's ideas and their effect on the right political wing. Another prominent work is *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical* by Ch. M. Sciabarra, which dwells on the Russian roots of Rand's radical world vision. The current article may contribute to the Ayn Rand studies by shedding light on one more facet of that ideologically influential persona, namely, her role and place in the global world.

The aim of this article is to consider Ayn Rand, a writer and philosopher of the twentieth century, in relation to globalization through the analysis of her fiction. My objectives are: tackling the popularity of Rand's novels, eliciting the means by which Rand brings her ideas home for the mass reader, pointing to the specific features of globalization in Rand's fiction; tracing the links between Rand's creative method and the contemporary method defined as "capitalist realism".

From the methodological point of view, two works, *The Global Novel and Capitalism in Crisis: Contemporary Narratives* by Treasa De Loughry and *Capitalist Realism. Is there no Alternative?* by Mark Fisher, have been taken into consideration. De Loughry considers contemporary literature through the perspective of the specific economic and cultural/national features of globalization. Fisher introduces the concept of "capitalist realism" in order to define, as he argues, the only creative method left in the period of globalization. These works help outline certain features of Rand' s fiction relating it to the literature of globalization.

2. Rand's Literary Success

2.1. Duality of Philosophy and Entertainment

Discussing Rand's popularity requires paying attention to her readership, which reveals the fact that her novels appeal both to the so-called mass reader and the intellectual elite.[2] This suggests that Rand's fiction caters for a wide range of literary tastes. This phenomenon can be accounted for by the specific combination of matter and form in Rand's novels. In the first place, the bestsellers *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) are philosophical novels. According to the American journalist G. Weiss, *Atlas Shrugged* is "the main written source of her ideas" (34) for Rand's adherents. In these novels Rand raises such serious topical questions as the relations of the individual and society, the individual and the state, the problem of the working man and work ethics, the fate of the genius in a society of mediocrities, the position of science and the role of the technological progress in modern life. Rand tackles all these issues in terms of her philosophy.

At the same time, the philosophical content of Rand's novels is rendered by means of popular literature techniques, such as myth-making. Rand develops the national American individualistic views to the extreme point, she resorts to myths of the American mass consciousness, such as individualism, the myth of nineteenth-century America as "the golden age", the myth of American exclusiveness and of the New World's advantage over the Old One, the myth of America as a country of equal opportunities, the myth of good business as honest business. Rand creates her own myth of the morality of egoism and the immorality of altruism, which evolves from novel to novel to the point of philosophical generalization in *Atlas Shrugged* (Mirasova 4-6).

Besides flattering national pride, these myths are entertaining for Rand uses popular literature genres, such as a love story, science fiction, the psychological detective thriller, together with dystopia and utopia. Thus, the plot of *The Fountainhead* presents a most captivating love story impregnated with Rand's philosophy. The main female character, Dominique Francon, a tabloid reporter, falls in love with the hero of the novel, Howard Roark, a young architect, who defies traditional trends in architecture as well as the

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[2] Alan Greenspan, the former Chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board (Bauman 126), Hillary Clinton, the former US Secretary of State (Etkind, "Alice from Wonderland" 53), Andrey Illarionov, the former economic adviser of the Russian President (Etkind, "Alice from Wonderland" 53).

domineering collectivist morals in society. On discovering that Roark is a genius, Dominique, the daughter of a renowned architect herself, sets out to destroy his career in her column. Also, she marries Roark's ideological opponent, Peter Keating, without failing to declare to him that she despises him. In her paradoxical acts, Dominique is driven by a most implausible motive – she thinks that the society of mediocrities and conformist collectivists does not deserve Roark's architectural talent and his independent individualistic personality. The love story gets more intricate when Dominique intermediately marries another protagonist, Gail Wynand, who has personal traits similar to those of Roark's. Gail rises from poverty and becomes a newspaper magnate but, unlike Roark, he does not appear strong enough to fully overcome his dependence on society. Finally, Dominique happily settles down with her beloved Roark in his newly-built house that symbolizes his ideological and professional victory over collectivist mediocracy.

The plot of *Atlas Shrugged* evolves according several clear-cut genres. It centers round a covert strike of the country's most efficient business people against the government which dictates irrational laws, robs them by means of taxes, and encourages the underprivileged to live at the expense of the rich. Stealthily, one by one, the most successful businessmen abandon the country and settle down in a hidden gulch in the Colorado Mountains. So, when read this way, *Atlas Shrugged* is a political thriller. But there are also elements that belong to the psychological detective thriller. Dagny Taggart, the Vice President of the country's largest network of railroads, sets out on a search for the enemy who takes away her business partners, figuring out his motives and trying to foresee his further moves. The enemy eventually turns out to be a person sharing her own views, and Dagny ends up falling in love with him. The intricacies of this love story follow Dagny's romances with the novel's three most outstanding individualists. The novel also contains elements that belong to dystopia. Rand presents the picture of a demoralized country, left without its main producers and on the brink of catastrophe. The Gulch, on the contrary, is an ideal community ruled only by its inhabitants' minds and industry. In this section of the book, utopia is interwoven with science fiction. There are several scientific inventions far ahead the time when the plot takes place, such as a miraculous motor, which converts static electricity from the atmosphere into the power necessary for its own functioning, a most advanced

technological process for extracting oil from shale, fantastically high-quality steel and the like.

The aforementioned peculiarity of Rand's fiction finds confirmation in Heller's biography of Rand, where Heller mentions the fact that Rand consciously developed a method of building a story in tiers. She wants to satisfy a variety of readers' tastes by providing both entertainment and deeper meaning (see 194).

In her notes for *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand also theorises about different combinations of matter and form in creative fiction. She distinguishes between three levels of creative writing. The first one consists of "translating an old (known) abstraction through the medium of old fiction means" (Peikoff xv). According to Rand's scornful estimation, this is "the popular trash" (Peikoff xv). The second level consists of "translating an old abstraction through new, original fiction means" (Peikoff xv). This is what Rand calls "the good literature" (Peikoff xv). And finally, the third level consists of "creating a new, original abstraction and translating it through new, original means" (Peikoff xv). Rand claims this is her kind of fiction.

The masterful use of popular literature techniques for conveying her philosophy ranks Rand's fiction as popular literature. This contributes to its global popularity, since, according to Fotache's observation, "popular culture is much more globalized than high culture" (196).

2.2. *Duality of Reason and Emotion*

Another factor that contributes to making Rand's ideology popular through her fiction is the dual rational / emotional appeal of the latter. Although Rand's vision is known to be materialistically rational, she herself never underestimated the role of feelings, and advocated a synthesis of reason and emotion (Sciabarra 133–134). So, she set forth the tenets of objectivism not only through rational reasoning but also relying on people's emotions. Most illustrative in this regard is Rand's notion of "the sanction of the victim" (Rand et al. 153). This theoretical construct appears, for example, in *Atlas Shrugged*, where Rand reveals, in terms of objectivism, the immorality of the situation when the producers, such as Dagny Taggart and Hank Rearden, stayed away from the strike and silently sanctioned the predatory policy of the state by admitting its moral right to take away some of their earnings in order to redistribute it among the needy. Rand's protest credo is expressed by one of

the strikers: "We produced the wealth of the world – but we let our enemies write its moral code" (*Atlas Shrugged* 619). Hank's family relations also provide a good example of such injustice. Although he supports his wife, mother, and brother financially, Hank allows them to despise and ridicule him because he wants to get rich. In Rand's emotional wording, "it is a moral crime to give support to your own destroyers" (Ayn Rand Institute).

With the same zeal, Rand discredits altruism in *The Fountainhead*. A good example is the episode when Dominique Francon goes to live with slum-dwellers for two weeks. She had been given this task by her editor with a view to investigating the life conditions of the slum-dwellers. On returning, she was asked to speak at the meeting of social workers. Her report did not meet the altruistic intentions of her employers though, as she said, the family on the first floor did not pay the rent and the children did not go to school for lack of clothes and because their farther was a drunkard. On the fourth floor, the father of the family with nine children and a tenth one on its way had not done a whole day's work in all his life, and the family was supported by the local parish (*The Fountainhead* 137). Thus, through her heroine's rational analysis of the situation, Rand calls upon extirpating the natural feeling of remorse that people usually have in a situation when they are expected to give alms to a beggar. In other words, Rand stirs up an appropriate emotion using reason.

Rand employs the concept of "the sanction of the victim" to deprecate the state of things in American society by bringing to light "the fact that some of the worst anti-business, anti-capitalist propaganda has been financed by businessmen" (Ayn Rand Institute) who offered their financial support to programs in higher education.

To sum up, among Rand's means to bringing her ideology home to the masses is emotional reasoning, which is meant to eliminate emotional uneasiness while pursuing the moral of egoism.

2.3. "Deep story" in Atlas Shrugged

Rand's popularity can also be analyzed using Hochschild's theory of "a deep story" which was presented in Hochschild's book *Strangers in Their Own Land*. The researcher tries to find the answer to a paradoxical question: Why do the citizens of the US poorest states traditionally vote for candidates who resist federal help? Hochschild undertook a journey from Berkley to Louisiana, a stronghold of the conservative right, having previously re-read Rand's *Atlas*

Shrugged, "a Tea Party bible", as she calls it. Her experimental mixing up with the Tea Party supporters led her to formulating the concept of "a deep story", which is a story that is factually incorrect, but feels true. The "deep story" Hochschild analyzes is the American dream. She metaphorically describes the feelings of people disappointed by the democratic changes. They feel as if they were "waiting in line" for a reward, i.e. waiting for the American dream coming true and at the same time, witnessing unwelcome "line-cutters" (37). Rand's "deep story" in *Atlas Shrugged* is, in fact, a variation of the American dream, which helps her reach out to a considerable part of the American population.

Specifically, in *Atlas Shrugged* Rand recreates the myth of the American Adam whose features are outlined by Jonathan Mitchell in his work *Revision of the American Adam: Innocence, Identity and Masculinity in Twentieth Century America*. Firstly, Rand's protagonists fully correspond to Mitchell's image of the American Adam. They are "white, male, heterosexual, industrious and Christian (Protestant)" (Mitchell 4). All her heroes are strong masculine characters of extraordinary integrity. Most indicative in this respect is the triad of the main male protagonists: John Galt, the beginner of the strike, a talented engineer and brilliant inventor; Francisco d'Anconia, the owner of copper mines on both of American continents; Hank Rearden, the owner of a steel plant, the inventor of a super-strong alloy. The only female protagonist, Dagny Taggart, is also perceived within this paradigm due to such qualities as determination, ambition, industry, toughness in dealing with the opponents, ability to rationally assess a situation, ability to face difficulties and take risks. On the other hand, she does not fulfill the traditionally feminine roles of a wife and a mother.

In addition, Mitchell highlights that the American Adam's field of action is a frontier, which is also the case in *Atlas Shrugged*. Here, the image of a frontier as a battlefield between good and evil is recreated in the situation which lies at the core of the plot: a group of the country's most successful capitalists fight against the socialistic model of management introduced by the government at different enterprises. The Gulch, their secret settlement, also functions as a frontier, where the heroes oppose the "corrupted" society by restoring the righteous ideals of egoism and free-market capitalism. Another feature of a frontier, outlined by Mitchell, is its limited accessibility. The Gulch is accessible only to the chosen ones. The Gulch is protected from the outer "fallen" world not only by rocks, but also by an ingenious invention of its

inhabitants – a screen of reflecting rays which creates a mirage. In this way, any possible intruders are misled because they do not get the real view.

According to Mitchell, America as a nation is beset with ideological differences between the country's physical reality and its idealized image in people's minds (5). Rand's utopia fuels the ideal image to the detriment of its physical reality. This makes people feel good and that is why this ideal image is bound to find quite a lot of followers.

Summarizing, the first element that makes Rand's novels global is the mere fact of their worldwide popularity, which results, largely, from Rand's aforementioned original methods of getting to her readers.

3. Globalization in Rand's Fiction

According to the Webster Dictionary, globalization is "the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets" ("Globalization"). In my opinion, this dictionary definition is not complete. It has to include aspects beyond the economic sphere as they appear in Treasa De Loughry's definition. Globalization is "a mode of economic expansion, cultural homogenization, and American dominance" (2). Rand's novels, though written at least half a century before the term *global literature* started to circulate, reflect both of the aforementioned economic and cultural/national features. The former is obvious in Rand's ardent advocacy of unfettered capitalism. The latter is the consequence of Rand's dual Russian–American biography, which naturally influenced her writing and which can be regarded as "the interconnectedness of literary cultures" (Fotache 198), characteristic of global literature

Rand's trust in unfettered capitalism is most evident in *Atlas Shrugged*, where the government control which hinders production in the country and makes the producers' life unbearable, is parodied most sharply. A mere enumeration of the government-initiated laws of socialist orientation speaks for itself. For instance, a government regulation has a name that is a self-explanatory caricature: "Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule" (*Atlas Shrugged* 73). This name ridicules anti-capitalist moods by ironically reviving in the reader's mind the aphorism "Homo homini lupus est", conventionally associated with capitalist relations. The absurdity of many other regulations is brought to light by highlighting their preposterous essence. One such regulation is "an

Equalization of Opportunity Bill", which limits business people's activity to one enterprise only in order to give all of them equal rights to compete. A sophisticated reader is reminded of the classics of satire, namely of George Orwell's aphorisms: "peace is war", "freedom is slavery". "A Preservation of Livelihood Law" prescribes the reduction of the production of highly needed metal to an amount equal to the output of any other steel plant of equal capacity. "A Fair Share Law" guarantees an equal supply of that metal to every customer who needs it. "A Public Stability Law" forbids companies from the East to move out of their states. In the same scornfully critical manner Rand describes the Unification Board, which controls every wage earner and every branch of industry; the Railroad Unification plan, which dictates the speed limit, the length of freight trains, and the number of trains run in different states; the Steel Unification plan, which is meant to force the producers of steel to deposit their gross earnings into the Steel Unification Pool, and at the end of the year the total amount of it is supposed to be divided and distributed by the number of furnaces owned by the producers. Thus, through this extremely negative description of all those governmental laws and regulations, Rand proclaims the benefits of free-market economy in the most transparent way.

Though Rand's advocacy of laissez-faire capitalism commonly associates her with neoliberalism, which is known to be the underlying ideology of globalization, the issue is considered to be debatable in Zuidhof's review of H. Achterhuis's research on the neoliberal character of Ayn Rand's philosophy (84-89). Zuidhof specifies that neoliberalism does not exclude government control, which Rand in her pursuit of free-market economy fights against. On the contrary, neoliberalism presupposes a government that is expected to build up a free-market society and set market relations in such spheres as health-care, crime and education (87). Further, Zuidhof asserts that Achterhuis overestimates the importance of Rand's role in the history of neoliberalism on several accounts. Firstly, he says that although Rand's work was popular, it was "berated by virtually anyone that mattered, including the likes of Hayek and Friedman" and continues that "the oft-cited influence of Rand's novels is very much a myth cooked up by Rand's own neoliberal marketing machinery" (86). Secondly, though he agrees with Achterhuis that Rand's work is "a unique example of utopian neoliberal thinking", Zuidhof emphasizes at the same time that "utopian imagery hardly plays a role in dissemination of neoliberalism"

(86). Thus, Zuidhof underlines the pragmatic nature of neoliberal policies as opposed to the utopian appeal of *Atlas Shrugged*. However, it is exactly the utopian imagery and the utopian appeal of Rand's novel that affect its readers most. And so, cogent as Zuidhof's arguments are, among the people who are Rand's readers of popular literature, and who do not commonly deal with the theoretical intricacies of the neoliberal theory, it is Rand who stands for freedom, opportunity, and success. In a word, Rand stands for all that constitutes the essence of the liberal thinking.

Rand's fiction can also be viewed through the cultural/national features of globalization. Although an emigrant from Russia, Rand herself seems to lack any spiritual kinship with the Russian culture in the midst of which she grew up. In her novels, she extolled fundamental American values, such as individualism, free enterprise, private property. Rand's fiction manifests a certain correlation with the feature described as "American dominance" in De Loughry' s definition (2). However, despite Rand's own dissociation from Russia, there exists some research that traces the Russian influence on her views. Thus, Sciabarra elicits Rand's educational and cultural background. He concludes that she inherited her "genuine philosophical synthesis", i.e. her tendency to the transcendence of the dichotomies between the spiritual and the material, the mind and the body, reason and emotion, from the Russian tradition, where it was most characteristic (see 133-134). The embodiment of this transcendence is her ideal man, John Galt from *Atlas Shrugged*.

So, the interrelation of both these cultures, the one that shaped her personality and the one which she strove after, provides, by way of their fusing, the transnational character of Rand's writing, which may be correlated with "cultural homogenization" (2), according to De Loughry' s definition.

Summarizing, Rand's fiction reflects both the economic and the cultural/national features of globalization.

4. Rand's Creative Method and the Capitalist Realism of Globalization

In the context of globalization, Rand's novels can also be analyzed using the concept of "capitalist realism". This theoretical construction was introduced in 2009 by the British writer and cultural theorist Mark Fisher who argues that after the Soviet Union had collapsed, capitalism remained the only viable

economic and ideological system in the world. At present, we are in the situation in which it is "easier to imagine the end of the world rather than the end of capitalism" (6). To illustrate his assertion, Fisher turns to the world's reaction to the 2008 financial crisis, which showed that instead of starting a search for alternatives to the existing model, the crisis reinforced the conviction that modifications must be made within the existing system. Fisher considers that capitalist realism has developed an attitude in society that everything, including education and healthcare, should be run as a business, and concludes that "capitalist realism … is more like a pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action" (20).

Fisher's ideas are further elaborated in De Loughry's work, where she examines "the narrative strategies of modes of realism and narratives of globalization, conditioned as they are by 'rational' attunements to capitalist reality, amidst a flattening of national differences, the diminishment of political possibilities, and imaginaries that tend to figure the end of the world sooner than the late capitalism" (3). Obviously, Rand's realism – and she claimed to be a romantic realist on the ground that the values she dealt with "pertain to this earth and to the basic problems of this era" (*We the Living* xi) – is different from what De Loughry aims at, merely due to the fact that Rand did not have to attune her mode of writing to capitalist reality, if only for the reason that in her lifetime capitalism in the USA was, to a certain extent, shattered by President F. Roosevelt's economic policy (New Deal Program) and the leftist sentiment in American society spread widely. However, Rand's method definitely correlates with the narrative strategies De Loughry discusses through the examples of such writers as Salman Rushdie, David Mitchell, Rana Dasgupta, and Rachel Kushner in what De Loughry describes as their "practices of resistance against the system of which it [their method] is a product" (205).

As the Russian sociologist Vladimir Shlyapentokh asserts (see 179), the development of Rand's radical views was caused by the events she witnessed in the young Soviet State before her emigration to the USA. Rand (Alisa Rosenbaum at the time) fiercely opposed the new regime, which finds reflection in her first autobiographical novel *We the Living*. In this book, Rand depicts the hardships of the post-revolutionary life, enhanced by the permeating atmosphere of fear, emanating from the state, which the eighteen-

year-old heroine Kira Argunova, the writer's *alter ego*, experiences on a daily basis. But while fighting the new regime ideologically, Rand herself acquired its methods, which proved most effective in instilling the required ideology.

On this ground, without taking into account Fisher's views, the American Slavic studies scholar Donald Barton Johnson (see 52) and the Russian cultural theorist Alexander Etkind use the same term "capitalist realism" to define Rand's creative method. They argue that Rand's writing follows the pattern of socialist realism from the Soviet Union, with the only difference that she extolls capitalism, not socialism, as the highest virtue. Thus, Rand appears to have practiced the method resulting from the ideology she actually resisted, which is in full accord with De Loughry's characterization of the narratives of globalization.

To sum up, living in a different historical period under different, virtually opposite, social conditions, Rand's method of writing, essentially, bears a certain similarity with the narrative strategies of globalization.

5. Rand in the Context of the Globalist/Antiglobalist Discourse

Discussing Rand in the context of globalization requires also considering how she tends to be used in today's globalist/antiglobalist discourse. As was previously mentioned, first, Rand is associated with globalization on the ground of her life-long promotion of free-market capitalism and the ideas associated with it which were resurged by neoliberalism. Besides, globalization is known to have been triggered by the fall of communism, for which Rand also strove all her life. Such ideological attitudes draw her close to the party of globalists.

However, the question of taking sides appears to be not so straightforward, mostly, due to the turns the process of globalization has lately taken. Today globalization indicates a high degree of economic integration. Yet, it has not resulted in due political integration, and currently the borders between countries, instead of expectedly getting more transparent, are becoming more distinct. This phenomenon is analyzed in the chapter called "Back to Hobbes?" (26) of Zigmunt Bauman's book *Retrotopia.* Bauman concludes by admitting pessimistically that the question mark in the title can be deleted (54). Paradoxically, this opposite process of disintegration also finds reflection in

Rand's ideology, namely her ideas about the "sanction of the victim". Rand declared it right to ignore the less fortunate ones and put all the blame for their hardships on themselves. Namely, they did not work hard enough to be successful. The same attitude is being taken towards the population of the countries with low-income economies. This argument morally justifies the reluctance to let undesirable migrants enter more developed countries.

Another factor that brings Rand into the context of the globalist/ antiglobalist discourse is her feeling of nostalgia for the nineteenth century USA, which she lauded as an epoch of "romanticism in aesthetics, individualism in ethics and capitalism in politics" (*The Romantic Manifesto* 103) This nostalgically idealized image of America's glorious past is recreated in the utopian Gulch from *Atlas Shrugged,* which is presented as a copy of the USA. In Rand's words, "for one magnificent century … redeemed the world, and which rebirth … has to start here" (*Atlas Shrugged* 771).

In this sense, right-wing politicians all over the world inspired by Rand's philosophy (see Burns) follow Rand's ideology in making nostalgia for the past inform plans for the future. Donald Trump's recent slogan "Make America Great Again" is a good example in this respect. As such, Rand contributed a lot to the US's self-narrative and keeps resonating so powerfully among the American population.

In conclusion, the vitality of Rand's ideas in the period of globalization is proved by the fact that they are actively resorted to by both by globalists and anti-globalists. They all draw the necessary arguments to back up their position from Rand's work. This fact alone opens a vast opportunity for further researching the Ayn Rand phenomenon on the border of literature and sociology.

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Rhetoric and Transposition: From the Utopian Monologue to the Dystopian Multicultural Approach. A Case Study

Constantina Raveca BULEU

Talking about the protean capabilities of the utopian literature Bernard Levin remarked in his seminal *A World Elsewhere*: "The range of utopia was, as far as I could see, infinite, and any kind of catalogue would be impossible, if only because utopias are, amoeba-like, capable of indefinitely dividing themselves in half" (XVI). If this seems to me by all means correct, let's try to understand the almost never ending self-dividing power of a utopian text by analysing the Romanian author Gheorghe Săsărman's latest novel entitled *Alfabetul distopiilor* (*The Alphabet of Dystopias*). It's a radical conservative approach, pushing the relation between utopia and dystopia up to its limits. On the other hand, it's a politically incorrect text, which sums up the extremes concerning the future of our civilization. Can we talk about the special category of *grim imagination* when discussing the relationship between multiculturalism and dystopia? Morus or Kafka? This is the starting point of my considerations.

The fictional pact of the novel is rather blurrily exposed from the beginning: "I know quite well that the stories which I am going to tell are hard to believe, and therefore I do not expect them to be taken as authentic; but isn't reality so weird, that it makes you sometimes wonder whether you are not actually dreaming…?"[1] (Săsărman 7). But this fictional pact engages a great variety of speculative scenarios which start from the assumption that the path leading from the reality of the fiction to the fiction of reality is paved by a

[1] „Știu bine că întâmplările pe care vi le voi povesti sunt greu de crezut și nici nu mă aștept să le luați drept fapte autentice; dar nu-i oare realitatea însăși atât de stranie, încât te întrebi uneori dacă nu cumva visezi și dacă ceea ce vezi cu propriii tăi ochi este chiar adevărul adevărat?". The translations from Romanian belong to the author of the paper.

multitude of socio-cultural transformations. The eschatological scenarios presented in the novel are based on the polemic between a post-materialistic, pluralistic scientific discourse, set from the beginning to accept that there will be multiple ways to reach the end of our civilization, and the oneness of the positivistic discourse, which offers the strict and neat certainty of our civilization. In order to endorse the first of the two approaches, Arthur C. Clarke, a main figure of the twentieth century SF writer has formulated his third law according to which "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic"[2]. Clarke's statement is quoted twice by Săsărman already on page 9 of his novel. On the other hand, Săsărman mentions the belief in the existence of the so-called universal memory, which uploads everything, any event and any content of any conscience, similar to Jung's collective subconscious and closely related to the biblical godly thinking pre-existing the universe.

In order to make both ends meet, that is to harmonize the pluralist thinking and the positivistic scepticism, the author goes back to Aristotle's idea of emergence, which says that the whole of a given system surpasses the simple sum of its constitutive parts. The theory subsequently asserts that by becoming a whole, a system can also deploy other faculties than the properties of its constitutive parts. Coined by G.H. Lewes in 1875, discussed by John Stuart Mill and re-labelled by Paul Nicolai Hartmann as a so-called "categorial novum", the principle of emergence was integrated into a large variety of works by biologists, sociologists and economists, becoming nowadays the dynamic equivalent of a trans-disciplinary mechanism. According to J. de Haan (293-301) the emergence represents something which transcends the functional energy of the object that produces it. De Haan proposes a pluralistic typology (discovery, mechanistic, and reflective), based on the position taken by the observers and on the linkage (called "conjugate") between the emergent property and its constituent elements.

In Gheorghe Săsărman's fiction the principle of *emergence* resembles Jung's generative collective subconscious and it is set to explain the pluralistic dystopian scenarios described in the novel. This intention is summed up in the

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[2] „o tehnologie suficient de avansată nu poate fi deosebită de magie".

Prologue. During its existence and throughout its evolution, mankind would have favoured

> "the formation of several structures whose complexities and properties can hardly be imagined by the human mind (…) [and] in favourable circumstances the successive developments of human groups could generate collective depositories of the common informational memory which would transcend the limitations of the individual consciousness, in a similar way to those botnets where thousands and thousands of computers are interconnected without the users' awareness.[3] (14)

Having in mind the pattern of the global inter-connectivity, the narrator of the novel is engulfed in a series of eschatological de-corporeal experiments, very similar to the *near death experience* implying identity transfers and some sort of levitation, followed by the entrance into the realm of an explosive luminosity. Each experience occurs at precisely 12 past 1 after midnight, followed by a return at exactly the same time, the richer and richer upload of the narrator's memory indicating the fact that he has lived different lives simultaneously. In order to offer an analogy of what he has in mind, the author recalls a story from the *Arabian Nights*, when the Sultan of Egypt is convinced by Sheikh Shahabeddin to immerse his head into water in order to foresee the events of the coming seven tragic years he is going to spend in exile. Săsărman's dreamy de-corporeal experiences resemble the mythical and literary paradigm of the *journey*, which traditionally connects our real world to the utopian one. Real or symbolical, the journey de-structures the traveller's personal and cultural core, provides a spiritual, personal and temporal metamorphosis and lays the foundations of a new type of knowledge legitimizing the transgression.

The selection of the stories is interesting, because out of the infinite variety of possible dystopian scenarios the author lists only five, according to the logic of an inverted acrostic. So five of the six letters forming the word UTOPIA expand and germinate five dystopian scenarios (*Universalism, Trans-humanism*, *Oikumene*, *Post-humanism* and *Amazonia*). The sixth letter, marked in the book with a blank page, is allocated to *Nihilism*, each reader being invited

[3] „formarea de structuri și mai complexe, cu proprietăți noi, pe care abia ni le putem imagina", iar „în condiții prielnice, pe treptele succesive ale grupurilor ar putea lua naștere entități colective, depozitare ale zestrei informaționale comune, care ar transcende limitele conștiinței individuale – la fel cum într-un așa-numit botnet mii și mii de calculatoare sunt puse să lucreze împreună fără știrea posesorilor."

to imagine its content by himself. The narrator says in his *Epilogue*, "about the epoch when mankind is literally soaked into nihilism I couldn't find anything intelligent or more or less secretive to say, so I said to myself that the best thing to do would be to limit myself to the title, and allow the reader to complete the story in the way he wants"[4] (302).

The *Epilogue* also stipulates that the suggested dystopian extremes are not the only ones our civilization is able to produce, the list of the possible planetary catastrophes being virtually completed with the demographic expansion associated to famine, the global warming, the deadly offensive of the desert sand associated to the necessity of going underground in order to survive, the post-nuclear civilization, the cosmic exodus or the invasion of the extraterrestrials. By confronting the reader with such a vivid spectre of grim disasters, the narrator advances a conclusion which is typical for any dystopian discourse: no matter how loud our laments caused by the lurking threats are, the world we inhabit is nevertheless the best we can imagine. Furthermore, if we take into account the principle of *emergence*, each person is fully alienated, no matter the time or the space.

Despite the narrator's belief that we live in the best of the imaginable worlds, the discourse of the novel is articulated in such a manner that it becomes an intrinsic critique of our times. Bronislaw Baczko has said that any utopian discourse actually formulates the most significant image of the anxieties, aspirations and hopes of a given society, because the stake of any utopia is to challenge the rational texture of a given society, to put it under scrutiny, to diagnose its moral or social frailty, and to offer a more or less dreamlike remedy (18-20). By putting it differently, every utopian fiction actually de-legitimizes an anxiety discourse. But by playing with the letters of the word UTOPIA, Gheorghe Săsărman suggests that within any utopia it hides a germinating dystopia, similar to the seeds of a plant in their sheaths.

Defined as a form of imagination, the utopian discourse is also tempted to investigate the logic of the possibilities of the real world, or to prospect, in Raymond Ruyer's words, "the collateral possibilities of reality" (9). *The*

[4] „despre o vreme în care omenirea s-a lăsat literalmente dizolvată în nihilism, oricât m-am străduit, n-am găsit a spune nimic inteligent sau cât de cât cu tâlc, și atunci mi-am zis că lucrul cel mai înțelept ar fi să mă rezum la titlu, lăsându-i fiecăruia libertatea de a-și plăsmui narațiunea aferentă cum va crede el de cuviință."

Alphabet of Dystopias offers exactly *collateral possibilities* (or scenarios) *of the reality* we are living in, by exploring several sequences of multicultural stereotypes (migration, trans- and post-humanism, feminism a.s.o), associated to the idea that utopias necessarily germinate multi-focal forms of their extinction. Built on the pattern of disseminating a utopia into different dystopian civilizations, the message of the novel suggests that while the utopian plan of a given civilization leads to a more or less monochrome pattern, its decay caused by its inner multicultural fragmentation will always produce a plural dissipation.

In order to demonstrate the hypothesis relying to mathematics, Săsărman's narrator is projected simultaneously into five imaginary scenarios of our future, which are actually five extreme projections of the different types of multicultural discourses our epoch is nurturing. For instance, the first chapter entitled *U from Universalism* presents the radical eschatology of the Western world which made implosion under the pressure of its universalistic ideology. Teleported in Marienplatz, in Munich, in the hypothetical year 2041 (the place is very familiar to the protagonist because the writer actually lives here), he finds himself in an almost deserted city overcome by garbage and by the ruins of the former churches and libraries. Abandoned corpses are scattered on the streets, and the otherwise familiar town is taken over by daily scenes of macabre violence, as the outcome of a hybrid and capricious civil war engaging various belligerent factions has structured in fragile and reversible alliances.

Being finally integrated by one of those communities, which have managed to achieve some sort of substitutive social normality (inner rulings and norms have been settled, individual duties have been allocated, including rules for schooling, idea debates or culture), the protagonist soon realizes that the socio-political dismemberment is the outcome of a decision taken by the "chancellor of those times"[5] (Săsărman 34) – a.k.a. Angela Merkel –, in September 2015 to welcome and integrate the immigrants. Based actually on a miscalculation, the chancellor's decision occurred "without the previous consult and solidarity of the other members of the European Union"[6] (Săsărman 34-35), and it was taken by ignoring the cautious premonitions

[5] "cancelara de atunci".

[6] „care se bizuia, în mod neîntemeiat și fără a le fi consultat, pe solidaritatea celorlalte țări membre ale Uniunii Europene".

related to the fragile social and cultural equilibrium of the nation. The decision was also endorsed by a UNO paper completed in the year 2000, which concluded that the low birth rate of the Western world could be compensated by assimilating the over-increasing populations from elsewhere, especially from Africa and the Arab world, following the refugee crisis triggered by the Syrian war and by the proclamation of the Islamic State.

In Săsărman's dystopian novel events, like these, are projected onto an augmented international confrontational canvas which features, in the year 2018, the conflict "between the rich and the rest of the population, between the West and the Third World, between North and South and East and West…"[7] (33), but especially between the Western civilization, "allegedly dominated by the «white, old, heterosexual male» and the rest of the planet"[8] (33). As a consequence of these generous but too abstract intentions, the dystopian scenario presented in the novel asserts the grayish downgrading of the life standards and the failure of the historical experiment called "the multicultural society". Further premonitions run as follows: the mass media and the Internet will succumb under the tremendous pressure of incoherent information, while the anxiety generated by the threat of continuous misinformation will necessarily lead, at first, to a diffuse self-imposed censorship, whose aim is to fight against misinformation and, subsequently, to a systematic, centralized censorship, which will become more resilient than the state itself. In the dystopian Munich the visitor realizes that the implosion of the state has caused the gradual decay of the infrastructure. Computers, TV-sets and household appliances have been abandoned and lie everywhere around, because there is no more electricity to make them move. The information networks, mobile phones and laptops have died gradually, because there is no more economy to fabricate batteries and accumulators. Here and there, nevertheless, the radios continue to function.

The second chapter, entitled *T from Trans-humanism*, takes the protagonist to the central square of a town dominated by a huge ad which says: "*Don't miss the opportunity, enrol for immortality*!"[9] (Săsărman 53). The poster features a

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[7] "între cei extrem de bogați și restul populației, între țările lumii întâi și cele ale lumii a treia, între Nord și Sud și între Est și Vest".

[8] "dominată, chipurile de «bărbatul alb, vârstnic, heterosexual», și restul lumii".

[9] "Nu rata o ocazie unică, decide-te pe loc pentru nemurire!"

Terminator-like bodybuilder adorned with a quotation taken from Nietzsche – "*Behold, I bring you the Superman!*"[10] (Săsărman 53) and annotated with an explanation saying that "*There's a Superman reserved for everybody, no matter how much money you have*"[11] (Săsărman 53). The teleported protagonist quickly understands that the dystopian Supermen are delivered according to the market availability and how heavy the candidate's purse is. The trans-human geography resembles the world in *Matrix*: myriads of disseminated individual capsules are connected to terminals which manage everything: from providing nutrients and psychotrope substances to eliminating dejection. These capsules are supervised from gigantic, transparent pyramids. On the other hand, the capsules ensure a paradoxical existential autarchy to each entity connected to the system. The occupants enjoy the illusion of their total freedom and their physical singularity, and they are rewarded with an unlimited integration into the world of the social networks. For many of those people, the full access to the cultural heritage of the mankind and the infinity of the virtual experiences mean nothing less than salvation itself, because previously they "had no qualification or profession, they vegetated but did not live, were dependent of alcohol and drugs, were enslaved by the most trivial TV networks and by their own smartphones, clients of the casinos, jails and of psychiatry"[12] (Săsărman 64-65).

The encapsulated, hyper-human living provided by a business called *Hyperion* reduces the consensual people to zombies, while the new elite living in the real world is composed by an outstanding, over-resistant, and very rich species of political influencers, who are continuously re-modelled by genetic engineering, psycho-pharmacology and nanotechnology in order to become potentially immortal. The elite is capable to reproduce itself indefinitely. Multiculturalism has been replaced by the ancient socio-economic segregation distinguishing only two classes of people, namely separating the trans-human maggots from the few privileged people resembling to gods.

The next chapter, entitled *O from Oikumene*, features a theocratic dystopia, the result of the generalized religious fanaticism and former identity conflicts. The feudal regression of the society encountered by the traveller is directly

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[10] "Am venit să vă vestesc Supraomul!"

[11] "Noi vă aducem Supraomul în casă, pe măsura fiecăruia, pentru orice pungă!"

[12] "indivizi fără ocupație și fără nicio calificare, vegetând iar nu trăind, dependenți de alcool și de droguri, robi ai posturilor triviale de televiziune și ai propriului smartphone, clienți ai cazinourilor, ai pușcăriilor și ai psihiatriei."

"Savonarolic" (the reference to the Italian priest Savonarola is explicit in the text). The long desired fusion of the main religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) is finally achieved after repeated ideological compromises and it throws mankind into the most radical religious paradigm one can imagine. The most furious iconoclasm has destroyed all art inspired by religion and enthroned the exclusive principle of faith. The new spiritual synthesis is called *Superbism*, its religious and political leader is *His Sanctity The Superbissimus*, both terms functioning as ironical replicas of the late *superbia,* heralded by the ancient Romans and later on by the Minnesänger as well as the artists of the Renaissance.

The centre of the new religion is a god having no name and no face, who is surrounded by a pantheon of prophets, patriarchs and saints including Moses, Jesus, and Mohamed. Rewritten and thoroughly altered, the ancient Books of Wisdom have been altered and combined into a canonical written codex which is considered to be the solely source of truth. As there are no alternative books, there is simply no place to look for your challenging answers. The new faith had not only affected knowledge, but it's been also extended onto biology. The new sages have challenged the former God's canonical saying "*increase and multiply, and fill the earth*"[13] (Săsărman 113), they have declared it a mistake because it has generated nothing more than an imbalanced demography. Consequently**,** the new order has decided to curb overpopulation drastically and imposed a new type of family, characterized by the absolute dominance of the male, the condemnation of sex and fornication, and the strict fecundation *in vitro* of no more than two children: a boy and a girl.

Uniformity has also altered the physical identity of the individuals. Only standardized males were admitted into the public space, so their composure has been altered by a strict similarity code. They are recognized by the form and size of their beards and by a pin featuring a combination of letters and numbers which indicates their geographical origin, their qualification, the date of their birth and the marital status. Relocated into separate compounds and obliged to cover their heads and bodies in order to seclude their identity, women continued to be, nevertheless, more efficient than men when it comes to challenging the laws which contain biology. The fight witnessed by the narrator is related to the public burning of a sexual transgressor. The women revolt and pour into the square where the pyre is placed.

[13] "înmulțiți-vă și stăpâniți lumea".

Conceived as a continuation of the trans-humanist story, the chapter *P from Post-humanism* presents a post-historian world in whose socio-politic economy paradise and hell have become obsolete, altogether with good and evil, ethics, morality and revolt, and with everything concerning the so-called rusty humanism. People have ceased to be biological individuals and they subsist only as digital entities connected to terminals or embodied by rotation in order to avoid the congestion of the system. The process of "embodiment", that is a person's transfer from the binary connection to biological existence, happens within the immutable being that has been uploaded into the virtual memory. Each accidental experience, be it a factual or a subjective one, is erased when the creature is deactivated, and that is why "forgetting has become the precondition of immortality"[14] (Săsărman 180).

Productive labour has no much sense in a life which is repeatedly interrupted by cybernetic sleeping, so it has become obsolete in a world where the transfers between energy and substance are regulated directly. As a consequence, because humanity has been disconnected from the worries of everyday life, a huge amount of creativity has become available, which is invested in artistry, play and, generally speaking, in the production of pleasure. There is no social aggression, nor wars, nor … politicians, but, nevertheless, somebody or something must take control of the new world by using the power of the omnipotent server, and this detail converts the whole system into a virtual eschatology. The entity who controls the server automatically gets the power of life and death over each individual belonging to the system.

Nevertheless, contrary to the religious dictatorship featured in the previous chapter, the good old biological world – which is able to evolve, whilst the post-humans are frozen and condemned to fixity – continues to exist within the post-human civilization, but it is secluded to the undergrounds of the megalopolis. Successors of those who had decided to refuse the digital immortality provided by the system, this population continues to credit the belief into a Messiah and functions according to the logic of the ancient rites.

If the theocratic misogyny of the *Oikumene* stirs within the narrator certain anti-masculine feelings, the openly practiced *androphobia* (hate against

[14] "uitarea este condiția primă a veșniciei".

men) of the chapter entitled *A from Amazonia* transforms him into the providential

> herald of a not necessarily better, but by all means of a more balanced world, while my mission, of which I haven't been aware from the beginning, but which appears to me now as a revolutionary one, if we take into considerations the categories of that realm, would be to entirely legitimize the subversive drives of the daughters of the rebellion.[15] (Săsărman 270)

The belief has nothing to do with the traditional radical feminism shared by the mythical members of the society of the Amazons, described by Homer, Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus or Strabo, but with the extreme pressure which legitimizes the double standards concerning body and knowledge. "I was aware – the narrator remembers – (…) that the idea of a world without men had been the hobbyhorse of the founders of the militant feminism for quite a long time, and that the mass media reactivates the idea from time to time"[16] (Săsărman 229). This attitude gives way to women to openly scapegoat men by accusing them for everything is wrong in the world: violence, fanaticism, corruption etc. There are, nevertheless, serious gaps in the extremist anti-male Amazonian system from the book, the practice of parthenogenesis being the most striking of them.

The story goes like this: the narrator finds himself in a new Arcadia, where nature has regained its luxurious dominance following a drastic demographic decline. The fragile ecosystem is populated by women only, who belong to a hybrid phenotype encompassing the blended genes of all the former races having lived on Earth. Their prevalent corporeal androgyny is obtained through a continuous hormonal treatment. Akin to their blended race, the language spoken by the members of the new "womankind"[17] (Săsărman 239) is a mixture of English, French, Italian, Spanish, German and a few exotic tongues. The masculine gender was carefully wed out from the language and replaced by feminine or periphrastic phrases. Socially and politically, the new world is structured as a federative network of different autonomous regions,

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[15] "mesagerul unei lumi nu neapărat mai bune, dar ceva mai echilibrate totuși, iar misiunea mea, de care nici măcar nu eram cu totul conștient, o misiune istorică din perspectiva acelui tărâm, era să legitimez pe deplin aspirațiile subversive ale fiicelor rebeliunii".

[16] "Știam (…) că ideea unei lumi fără bărbați le preocupă de mult timp pe corifeele feminismului militant și că revine periodic în dezbaterile din medii".

[17] "*f*emenire".

each of them being led by a council and a governor. The global supervising bodies (the world government, the world legislator and the world tribunal) managed to eradicate the conflicts, and therefore the armies were dismantled. The leading bodies also managed to equalize the wealth rate of every region and they legalized their flexible ecologic and social equilibrium.

Hard labour is done by androids. The Amazons were also liberated from the burdens of biology and especially reproduction, which are completed through parthenogenesis by cloning a cell from a mother. Religion has also absorbed a great deal of feminist distortions, because the centre of the pantheon was consecrated to the goddess Felicia, the very first self-cloned woman. Being unsuccessful, the experiment had nevertheless a tragic outcome. The goddess guards the fertility temples inhabited by the so-called Felicia's Vestals, who are carefully selected, bio-medically manipulated women, who give birth to children by fertilizing *in vitro* the sperm harvested from men kept in special farms similar to our zoos. Protected by state secrecy, the "reigns" of the hive, as the Vestals are called, also perpetuate the belief in the ancient myths of the parthenogenesis.

The founding goddess Felicia has also modified the calculus of time and the year 325 A.D. (the author promptly remembers that it is the year of the Council of Nicaea) was declared to be the first year of the new era, the starting moment of the new Felician cult. Everything before 325 was thoroughly erased from history in the best Orwellian way one can imagine, while the history of culture and arts has been also rewritten from a feminine perspective. The Amazons enjoy *Amadea* Mozart, *Leonora* da Vinci, *Francesca* de Goya etc., while *The Iliad* was officially attributed to Sappho. The literary masterpieces have suffered a similar process of "trans-gendering". The male protagonists were replaced, eliminated or diabolized, while Jesus was replaced by a female counterpart, conceived through parthenogenesis and crucified by a naughty and biased tribunal composed only by men.

Similar to other classical utopian stories, there is still a certain hope for normality in Amazonia because it is also inhabited by she-dissidents, who study *real* history, congregate into secret societies, perpetuate the ancient truth and want to experience the forbidden charms of sensuality. They gently prey for humans, because they are an infinite source of information and experience. Isolated in some sort of reserve after his arrival, and then quarantined in order to be purged of his exogenous viruses, the narrator is kidnapped by Dora, a

dissident historian who has secretly rejected the hormone treatment in order to let her body to grow naturally, both anatomically and sexually. Dora actually prepares the utopian future of Amazonia, allowing the writer to transmit his optimist message: any eschatology is actually reversible, when turned upside down, any dystopia becomes necessarily a utopia.

Let's conclude with a few theoretical remarks. Although seemingly any utopia heralds a multicultural discourse, on its way to exhaustion it tends to shrink into a mono-cultural ideology. James M. Buchanan's considers that this happens because "we live in a society formed by individuals" (35) striving to become, by all means, "a society of equals" (35). The manifestations of free will and liberty, the desire for knowledge and love undermine the reductive flow of any dystopian decay. While utopias are potentially dynamic, the most relevant characteristic of any dystopia is entropy. Therefore there is no utopia without a latent dystopian kernel. By using G. Kateb's words, each utopia starts with love and finishes with terror (qtd. in Maffei 25).

The different dystopian patterns enlisted in Gheorghe Săsărman's *Alphabet of Dystopias* actualize mutations existing inside any utopian discourse. They confirm Merlin Coverley's idea that "yesterday's utopia soon becomes today's dystopia" (43). Săsărman, nevertheless, asserts that even the gloomiest dystopia can be structurally reconverted into its utopian counterpart. So I wonder if John Gray, who said that "not only is utopia impossible to achieve, but the very attempt to realize it is itself the root of untold misery and suffering" (qtd. in Coverley 163) is actually right.

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How Multicultural is the History of Romanian Literature?

Monica MANOLACHI

A relatively high number of diverse histories of Romanian literature have been available on the market after 1989. Besides new editions of previous works in vogue during the interwar decades or the communist epoch, the new titles published and republished beginning with the 1990s demonstrate an increased level of awareness regarding the role of literary historians and critics in shaping the contemporary cultural environment. Next to reprinted pre-1989 tomes by established authors, researchers can find new literary histories, encyclopaedic dictionaries, but also syntheses based on new points of view, as well as volumes focused on certain genres, on historical regions and ethnicities, bilingual or translated, and even photo albums, collections of caricatures or memorial plaques.

Before answering the question posed in the title and delving into a series of contemporary histories of Romanian literature, it would be useful to explore the family of concepts associated with the idea of a *multicultural history of Romanian literature*[1], a broad term which is not very much used at the moment, in spite of various attempts at shaping this perspective both in Romania and abroad.

The idea of a *multicultural literature* is rarely used in relation to the national canon, because our literary canon has been defined mainly from a historical or an aesthetic perspective, for which the national language has been a compulsory condition. Nonetheless, the term has been employed as a Western borrowing when local and diasporic literary critics and historians have referred to literatures emerging in pluralist societies. Thus, they promote the values of multiculturalism indirectly, although there are literary productions in Romanian that may be very well described as multicultural.

[1] Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Romanian into English are made by the author of this article.

Another concept is that of *literary multiculturalism*, which is nowadays used when referring to some writers from the Romanian diaspora, such as poet Gabriela Melinescu, who is based in Sweden, with a focus on different geographies, religions and languages (see Dascălu and Dascălu), or novelist Felicia Mihali, who is based in Canada and has experienced the concept first-hand by coordinating a multicultural magazine and a multicultural publishing house. Although there are several multilingual literary magazines in Romania or abroad, the term is not used as such by the mainstream critics. A *multicultural magazine* can be found either abroad, in diaspora, or in the marginal or underground situations in the country. However, a simple search on Google shows that the adjective *multicultural*, often collocates with nouns that designate abstract concepts (society, politics, education, history, integration, identity or dimension), forms of organization (state, institution, school, community, association, team, group or family), forms of communication (library, festival, book or traditions), the name of a city, region or country, which proves a certain degree of development of the multicultural spirit in the Romanian society.

The concept of *multicultural aesthetics*[2] is relatively new in the Anglophone world and not in use in the writings of Romanian critics. For example, drawing on the discourse of Romanticism (Coleridge's trope of organicity) and on both faithful ontologies and sceptical epistemologies regarding multiculturalism, Lou F. Caton interprets the postmodern American novel considering that "an authentic multicultural aesthetics […] the unreachable translucent ideal of a perfect aesthetic 'wholeness' always motivates the social, political, and disputed sign of community" (xv). Although implied, the term is not used as such by Marcel Corniș-Pope and John Neubauer in their *History of the literary cultures of East-Central Europe*, but Corniș-Pope argues for the reshaping of literary history as multicultural in 2016 by drawing on the theory of conceptual history proposed by German historian Reinhart Koselleck. Nevertheless, whereas in the Anglophone cultures multiculturalism designates a more or less reachable ideal, Romania-based critics have yet to look into the matter. To many of them, it seems just another form without substance or, for the most traditionalist critics, even a dangerous Western import.

There are at least three reasons why multiculturalism and literature have not converged into a locally fully developed critical perspective yet. Firstly, the idea of multiculturalism usually emerges in societies with an imperial history,

[2] "estetică multiculturală" (in Romanian).

which attract bright minds and workforce from elsewhere in the world. For example, studies such as those by Christopher Douglas about the genealogy of literary multiculturalism in the United States or by Ulla Rahbek about the British multicultural literature and superdiversity reflect the existence of a very strong link between multiculturalism and literature in these countries. It is the result of the constant connection between politics (as an area of informed decisions) and literature (as a site of aesthetic reflection) that may influence all the other domains of life. Secondly, Romania has often been seen as a source of migrants rather than as a destination country over the past decades, which means literary heritage has been rather left behind in the context of migration, a situation that has gradually changed over the past two decades with the spread of the internet and the possibility of virtual connection. Thirdly, many leading Romanian literary critics – it may sound paradoxical – used to avoid, be indifferent to the cultural, the psycho-social, the anthropological, the political, the scientific issues when writing about the canon, concentrating their intellectual endeavour on aesthetic issues. The interwar concept of the autonomy of the aesthetic has been considered superior to any moralist, social or ethnicist view on literature. However, there have been attempts at shaping the pieces of a local multicultural literary puzzle, which may be the subject of further studies.

Alternatively, more frequent terms are *the literature of the diaspora* or *the literary diaspora*[3], perhaps because they can cover works by Romanian writers that lived or have lived abroad and do not include many of the daunting aspects of multiculturalism. A variety of publications which have these terms in their title demonstrate such concepts are in use among the literates from the country: an anthology by Florea Firan and Constantin M. Popa, surveys by George Glodeanu and Mihai Ion, or a collection of interviews by Flavia Topan. There are many other works on this topic in Romanian that may not employ any of these terms in the title, but they tackle the subject extensively. However, these terms are under debate given that there are voices who still question their meaning. For instance, when journalist George Rădulescu asked Dan Lungu if we can speak of a literature of the Romanian diaspora, the novelist was not sure how to define it:

> Literature is good or bad, no matter where it is written. We all write in Romanian, no matter where we live. To me, more interesting seems the case of those writers who left Romania and write in another language, English, French,

[3] "literatura diasporei" or "diaspora literară" (in Romanian).

> German, Italian, to give just a few examples. How to include them in the literature of the Romanian diaspora?[4]

In this case, of course, literary critics are indirectly compelled to consider cultural interdependence and translation aspects, not only the primacy of the national language and the aesthetic breakthrough, and to identify new modes of suture between ethics and aesthetics. A related fruitful term is that of *the literature of exile*[5] centered on Romanian émigrés. Early studies by established critics such as Cornel Ungureanu, Florin Manolescu, or Nicolae Băciuț were followed by doctoral theses by Sanda-Valeria Moraru, Dan Anghelescu or Ana-Maria Tomaziu-Patrașcu on Romanian literatures emerging elsewhere, which demonstrates an intergenerational intellectual interest in the integration of exiled authors in the literary canon. Alternative terms such as *the literature of (e/i)migration*[6] are sometimes used in Romanian in the context of other literatures, for example, Mihai Enoiu on the literature of Russian emigration, Dana Bizuleanu on the work of Herta Müller and Cătălin Dorian Florescu, or Adrian Gabor on the reception of the British fiction of migration.

An ethnocentric conceptualization that has become popular among critics is that of Romanian literature conceived as *world literature*[7], a term promoted by the prestigious Bloomsbury publishing house in its series entitled "Literatures as World Literatures", which reconfigures various national and transnational literatures as part of the wider cultural and literary history. In contrast with its original meaning of *Weltliteratur* proposed by J. W. Goethe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, circumscribing the masterpieces of Western European literature, the concept of world literature involves a series of social, geographic and ideological repositionings that question traditional nationalistic interpretations and encourage new routes on which ideas circulate, with the purpose of identifying subtle links between texts, authors, and literary trends belonging to various cultures.

The above contexts suggest that perhaps the time has come to focus on the Romanian terminology employed by literary critics and historians, and map how they communicate about issues linked to a possible multicultural

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[4] "Mai interesant mi se pare cazul scriitorilor plecați din România care scriu în altă limbă, în engleză, franceză, germană, italiană, ca să dau exemple de limbi în care știu sigur că unii conaționali se exprimă. Cum i-am încadra pe aceștia în literatura diasporei românești?" (online).

[5] "literatura exilului" or "literatura de exil" (in Romanian).

[6] "literatura (e/i)migrației" or "literatura de (e/i)migrație" (in Romanian).

[7] "literatură universală" or "literatură mondială" (in Romanian).

history of literature, including exiled and migrant authors, Romanians who travel abroad, foreigners who travel all over Romania, descendants of migrants as well as writers who belong to two or more literary spaces. What follows is a brief outline of the Romanian literary history with a focus on the critical terminology associated with the multicultural.

If we go back to the beginnings of Romanian literary history, it should be mentioned that the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was a period in which national values were cultivated. The two political unifications of the historical provinces – the union of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859 and the union of Transylvania with Romania in 1918 – eventually led to the consolidation of the idea of a national literary history. Therefore, the first histories of Romanian literature were meant to chart the genealogy of a literature emerging in time at the crossroads of other cultures: Latin, Greek, Slavonic, Western and Turkish. The first histories were made by historians, linguists, and educators, who took various ethnic and religious influences into account, but were not yet concerned with aesthetic criteria.

Historians have explained the various sources of Romanian language, initially a combination of Dacian and Latin, which was later influenced by Greek, Slavonic, Turkish and several Western languages. Like other languages, Romanian evolved from mere historical testimony to highly aesthetic products. In general, there are three perspectives on literary history when language is taken into account. Firstly, the historicists consider that the history of Romanian literature started with the first texts written in Romanian, for example, *The Letter of Neacșu from Câmpulung* (*Scrisoarea lui Neacșu din Câmpulung*) from 1521. Secondly, the protochronists support the idea that Romanian literature was written in other languages at the beginning. Although there may be some truth in it, this trend has often been associated with the exaggerated glorification of the past as a reaction to a certain cultural inferiority complex. Thirdly, the aestheticists believe that the authentic Romanian literature began when the first full-fledged literary works were published. Protochronism and aestheticism may be seen as the roots of the two contemporary views on the meaning of literary history: whereas the former has led to a cultural perspective of literature, the latter defends the values of the literary, especially the originality of the literary discourse. Nonetheless, the demarcation between them is not always strict since they have shaped each other in different ways from one epoch to another.

The first literary histories, published over the last decades of the nineteenth century, referred to the literature of the previous centuries, either to a certain epoch or to a longer period. They served as educational material and were often lectures for students in the newly founded faculties of history and letters. Students took notes that constituted the source for the future histories by Nicolae Iorga, Sextil Pușcariu, Gabriel Drăgan and others. Besides university courses, there were also pocket editions meant to make literary history more popular among a larger readership. Drawing on previous research, the historicist Nicolae Cartojan published *The History of Old Romanian Literature* (*Istoria literaturii române vechi*) in three volumes in the early 1940s. He did research on the diversity of anonymous books and their role in the old Romanian literature and culture, he studied codices that had not been previously evaluated and how they contributed to the formation of Romanian literature. Cartojan placed emphasis on the cultural features and complex functions of orality, creating thus a panorama of the silenced. His focus was on Greek, Italian, French, Spanish and other influences, and less on the Slavonic sources, which he examined in translation and which were analysed by other scholars later. He demonstrated how the spiritual values of the Romanian Middle Ages were born at the crossroads between the Latin West and the Byzantine and Slavic East. Cartojan had the scientific capacity and the ability to build the literary image of a civilization, both for his fellow citizens and for the international community of the time.

The first Romanian concerns regarding the literariness of the text can be found in the last part of the nineteenth century. Although Justin Popfiu was the first to use the term "critical history of literature" (103) in a conference from 1867, Titu Maiorescu contested the reality of the concept in 1869, dismissing it as part of "a whole range of mystifications" (194). By that time, important works from an aesthetic point of view, such as *The Hieroglyphic History* (*Istoria ieroglifică*) by Dimitrie Cantemir in 1705 or *The Gypsiad* (*Țiganiada*) by Ion Budai-Deleanu in 1800, had not been valorized from a literary perspective yet, because they were discovered later. It was Ovid Densușianu who developed the idea of literariness in his *Modern Romanian Literature* (*Literatura română modernă*) beginning with 1898, which influenced subsequent authors in the first half of the twentieth century. By the end of the interwar period, two other significant literary histories were published, each of them cantered on aesthetic issues from different perspectives: *The History of Contemporary Romanian Literature: 1900-1937*

(*Istoria literaturii române contemporane: 1900-1937*) by Eugen Lovinescu and *The History of Romanian Literature from its Origins to the Present* (*Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*) by George Călinescu are still viewed as milestones today. When Lovinescu explained his choice of contemporary literature, he argued that very good literature had been published by that time. A second reason is he believed his contemporaries (including the most renowned critics) confounded the aesthetics with the ethnic, the ethical or the cultural, and his aim was to enlighten and guide the youth on the meaning of literariness and aesthetic value by drawing the line between traditionalism and modernism. As far as George Călinescu is concerned, he rejected the idea that the history of Romanian literature should begin with works written on the territory of present day Romania in other languages and argued that the epochs when translations into Romanian dominated the local literary productions were weak in terms of originality. Călinescu did not question issues such as language, ethnicity or race. He was a radical aesthetician and published fundamental articles on research methods that represented a theoretical breakthrough at the time. After him, literary history turned from mere chronology to systematic analysis. He was not so much interested in style as a research topic, but he believed in a history of values based on impressions and criticism. In contrast with linguists and historians, who did not differentiate between culture and literature, and with professors, researchers and biographers, interested in established values, he suggested that critics are only those who perceive the artistic value of the literary text. In 2007, Cornel Ungureanu highlighted that in 1941, during World War II, Călinescu stated in the preface to his *History…* that literary cartography can help the survival of a people, thus demonstrating his faith in literature as a form of resistance against political conflict (see 508).

World War II and the post-war Soviet colonization determined many intellectuals to flee Romania and find a home in other countries. Some of them published histories of Romanian literature in other languages at the universities where they taught Romanian. A first such example is *Littérature roumaine* by Basil Munteanu, published in French in 1938 and translated into Italian in 1947. Exiled in Madrid and inspired by contemporary literary historians, Alexandru Busuioceanu printed an overview of Romanian literature in precarious conditions in 1942. Initially a teaching instrument for his Spanish students, the book was published as a bilingual edition in Bucharest much later, in 1998. In the introduction, he placed emphasis on the

idea of a Romanian culture at the crossroads between the West and the East and insisted on the multicultural roots of Romanian literature and on the literary effects of the psychic tensions caused by the intersection of multiple sources. In this context, he also questioned what is pure in the European world, evoking the Byzantine cultural vein of Romanian culture and rejecting the Slavonic influence, proving he was a rather pro-West literary historian. A similar destiny had Mircea Popescu, who printed his history of Romanian literature in Italian in 1970, which was published in a bilingual edition in Bucharest in 2001. He is considered one of the most important Romanian literary critics in exile, as he founded several literary magazines for the exiled authors. A disciple of George Călinescu, Popescu prefers the aesthetic exclusivism to the cultural approach, which becomes secondary in his view. He situates Romanian literature in the Balkans, next to Jugoslav, Bulgarian, Neo-Greek and Albanese literatures. He considers the ethnic and the racial mixture of the Balkans and the pastoral transhumance as factors of unity. These literatures have a common background (folklore, rural roots, religion, patriotism) and contribute to the world republic of letters. Any attempt to level off these literatures in the name of cosmopolitanism or of an ideological dogma has encountered the resistance rooted in a long history of sorrow, faith and struggle. It is interesting that Popescu begins his history by evoking the Latin poet Ovid, highlighting thus the existence of a relevant precedent: a good writer can write anywhere, not only in his country of birth.

During communism, a number of histories of Romanian literature were published in Romania. Some of them were new editions of old works, such as those by Călinescu and Lovinescu, while other critics drew on previous explorations and rewrote literary histories for the new regime: new research methods and new amplitude. However, in spite of the left-wing administration, the political ideology did not really promote cultural diversity, but uniformity, which determined the history of literature, too. The proletkultism of Russian import that was applied in Romania in the 1950s scared and even persecuted many local intellectuals, while the revival of protochronism during the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu reactivated a cultural inferiority complex. The production of literature during communism was controlled and censored by the state, hence the emergence of Romanian literature in exile, published either in Romanian or in other languages. In parallel with the literature locally produced, the domain of literary translations

developed significantly, many writers being somehow forced to express their creativity via translation. Literary productions from many foreign cultures entered Romanian literature via an extensive number of translations: both classical and contemporary authors.

The post-1989 decades have meant much more freedom, a diversity of critical approaches and an increased interest in both aesthetic and cultural issues. The introduction of cultural studies, the representation of multiple historical narratives, the expansion of literary geography or the questioning of literary innovation have been some of the new directions of Romanian criticism. The 1990s was a decade of transition, when the economic and the political were much more important than the cultural. Therefore, critics and historians produced more significant works in the next decades. For example, Nicolae Manolescu and Cornel Ungureanu drew on previous research to rewrite the whole history of Romanian literature: while the former cultivated the aesthetic-driven approach, the latter adopted a new stance to the cultural context in which literature is produced, closer to a multicultural view. At about the same time, critics Alex Ștefănescu, Marian Popa and Eugen Negrici rewrote the history of contemporary Romanian literature between World War II and December 1989: whereas the first remained concerned with aesthetic aspects, the second unearthed many controversial secrets about the literary life during communism, including issues related to ethnicity, race, class, gender and sexuality, and the third debunked many of the myths related to the literary history during communism.

In his long-awaited *Critical History of Romanian Literature* (*Istoria critică a literaturii române*), Nicolae Manolescu clarifies the differences between literary criticism and other forms of literary history such as handbooks, compilations, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, or critical theory, the same as George Călinescu did in his time. Manolescu is more interested in critical analysis and in establishing a literary canon, by combining the historical approach and the aesthetic concerns, with a clear focus on the latter. Manolescu questions the paradox that works about Romanian culture written in Slavic, Latin and Greek are considered works of Romanian literature, arguing that those were periods when the Romanian language played no role in the development of Romanian literature. Manolescu also questions the paradox of the protochronists who considered that Romanian literature before 1800 was synchronous with Western literature and contends that the synchronism with the West at that

time is an exaggeration, whereas the synchronism with other cultures from Eastern Europe is a more acceptable historical reality. Interestingly, Manolescu notices that the most remarkable and worthiest fact after 1989 is that, with the publication of new literary histories, the general trend is to diminish historical research as such in favour of multicultural studies, according to which the perspective on literature is not simply aesthetic any longer, but sociological, philosophical or otherwise (see 9-10). Although he admits that interdisciplinarity represents progress, Manolescu is still nostalgic for the primacy of the aesthetic approach and often relies on old-fashioned methodologies. He adapts literary history to the epoch and tries to shape the canon, a concept first mentioned in Romania by Virgil Nemoianu in the early 1990s, a critic who has lived in the United States since the 1970s. The fact that Manolescu included the works of novelist Radu Aldulescu, a writer who has published significant novels about marginals (Roma communities), comparing him with the French writer Louis-Ferdinand Céline, suggests a notable concession based on both aesthetic and cultural arguments. Still, Manolescu's view on the canon is rather traditionalist.

In *The Secret History of Romanian Literature* (*Istoria secretă a literaturii române*), Cornel Ungureanu takes over the idea of the frontier in a European context and puts forward two perspectives: "On composing the frontiers" and "On decomposing the frontiers". In the preface, he reminds us that Romanian culture belongs to Central Europe, a region that does not deny its previous moments of solidarity with the Greek, the Slavonic or the Turkish cultures. Ungureanu combines literary geography and geopolitics and draws attention to the fact that, in general, literary historians – both from Romania and from abroad – used to be cautious with their political statements. In Ungureanu's view, this has been a sign of identity crisis. The book is an example of literary geography and his second attempt to define a "Mitteleuropa of the peripheries" from a literary point of view. The critic explains that a secret history of literature rejects the historical exclusions and aims to retrieve and cast light on marginalised authors from different epochs. Greater insistence on contexts shows how literary history selects, eliminates and falsifies the content of the canon. He argues that today geopolitics is a science that transforms not only national frontiers, but also the aesthetic, the social, the corporeal, and the geographical frontiers. Together with the TV set and the computer, geopolitics stimulates the extreme aesthetics of the (in)acceptable limit.

In the preface to his massive *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature, 1941-2000* (*Istoria literaturii române contemporane: 1941-2000*), the outspoken critic Alex Ștefănescu wrote about the impact of the communist ideology on literature:

> In the second half of the twentieth century, Romanian literature was the object of a barbarous surgery of falsification, a kind of aesthetic surgery made with a hammer. Those writers who did not want to be part of this criminal act ended up in jail, went in exile or felt exiled in their own country. Some of them paid with their own lives, as a result of the regime of extermination.[8]

Those who did accept the rules of the regime are seen as having sold their soul and talent for public recognition. Ștefănescu believes literature does not owe anything to the communist regime, claiming the state Marxist-Leninist ideology did not produce literature, since literature was written in a political regime of hostility or indifference. He compares the ideology and the imposed official aesthetics with a heavy slab, whereas literary works are plants that still find the strength to grow around it. As far as Ștefănescu's criteria of selection are concerned, they are both literary and political: he includes all the works written in Romanian, no matter the country where the author lives. For Ștefănescu, individuals are more important than the groups, as bearers of history, in contrast with the situation before 1989, when individualism was a luxury.

Not so much interested in matters of artistic taste, Marian Popa proposes in *The History of Romanian Literature of Today for Tomorrow, 1944-1989* (*Istoria literaturii române de azi pe mâine: 1944-1989*) a perspective dominated by politics rather than the literariness of the epoch, giving more significance to the sociological and anthropological contexts. When a new generation of writers emerged in the 1960s, after the Soviet influence of the 1950s, with its prescriptive documents regarding literary creativity, the critic established in Germany reminds us that the most cultivated of these writers, those that had assimilated works of modern literature from other cultures, stayed away from the single-party politics. This attitude determined a schizoid relationship between nationalist politics and multiculturalism. Popa reiterates that the practice of Marxism-Leninism was different in the West and in the East: in the East, the ambiguity of coexistence was seen as official cultural politics, for

[8] "În a doua jumătate a secolului douăzeci literatura română a fost supusă unei operații barbare de falsificare – un fel de chirurgie estetică făcută cu toporul. Scriitorii care n-au vrut să colaboreze la acest act criminal au ajuns la închisoare, au plecat în exil sau au trăit ca niște exilați în propria lor țară. Unii dintre ei au plătit cu viața, ca urmare a regimului de exterminare din închisori." (5)

which class and some ethnic issues counted more, whereas race and gender were not important issues. Even though Popa questions some meanings of literary revision(ism) during communism, he uses a methodology based on exaggerated conviviality that lacks the capacity to fully explain the ethnic fusion through the art of literature during communism, preserving instead the interwar ethnic essentialism and the post-war protochronist type of nationalism, without making sufficient correlations between different literary works and their formative value. Cultural conviviality could be an interesting approach to literature, as theorised, for example, by Paul Gilroy, who defines it as "the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere" (xi). Nonetheless, as the British theorist of Guyanese origin shows, it depends on the politicians' "interest in the forms of conviviality and intermixture that appear to have evolved spontaneously and organically from the interventions of anti-racists and the ordinary multiculture of the postcolonial metropolis" (136). Whereas British literature has become multicultural especially since the 1980s, because of specific intensive and extensive public policies, a multicultural critical view on Romanian literature still constitutes a bone of contention.

There are a number of works of literary criticism which, even though not called histories, they engage with and challenge it in many ways. For example, in *The Illusions of Romanian Literature* (*Iluziile literaturii române*), Eugen Negrici debunks a series of myths associated with the history of Romanian literature, grouping them according to two categories of motivations which he calls "the protective impulse" and "the compensatory impulse". In the former category, he includes the need of stable reference points, the taboos of the literary heritage and its fragility, the creation of canonical writers, the idealised image of certain literary epochs, and the exaggerated importance of literary generations. The latter category comprises further aspects grouped in three sections: the representation of the literary past (pretentions of normality, the obsession with the synchronization with Western literatures, the obsession with abundance, greatness and primacy); the representation of literary histories (the *horror vacui* symptom, the obsession with nobility, the confusing influence of politics during communism); and the weaknesses of Romanian literature from the interwar epoch to the present. As expected, the essay has sparked a lot of criticism. Eugen Negrici also worked on *Romanian Literature under Communism: 1948-1964* (*Literatura sub comunism: 1948-1964*), in which he

gathered his previous studies to offer a less heroic perspective on the epoch. Maintaining aesthetic criteria, Negrici applies anthropological principles to demonstrate the dynamism of literature, with its interruptions and discontinuities, and show, in a deconstructionist fashion, that literariness preserved its autonomy despite the politically oppressive system.

Another significant trend has been the increasing interest in the literature of diaspora. For example, in *The Postwar Romanian Literatures* (*Literaturile române postbelice*), Ion Simuț rejects the singularity of Romanian literature and proposes a pluralist view of the subject in question, taking geographical, historical, typological and political criteria into account. The same as in *Journeys into Contemporary Literature* (*Incursiuni în literatura actuală*), Simuț questions whether the literature of exile is "another kingdom". Such interrogations should not be surprising given the type of nationalism in the 1990s, before the idea of cultural deterritorialization took root, first in urban areas and later in the province. A second example is that of critic Monica Spiridon, who published *Interpretation Without Frontiers* (*Interpretarea fără frontiere*), in which she promotes those literary critics who made careers in other countries. To give a third example, after critic Florin Manolescu's experience as a professor in Germany, where he was invited to teach a course on the literature of exile in the 1990s, he published two editions of *The Encyclopaedia of the Romanian Literary Exile: 1945-1989* (*Enciclopedia exilului literar românesc: 1945-1989*) with a focus on publications, institutions and personalities.

In his *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature: 1990-2020* (*Istoria literaturii române contemporane*), oriented towards younger generations of writers, Mihai Iovănel proposes a leftist perspective on the new literature of the past three decades, rooted in the pre-1989 literary phenomena and criticism. He offers updated perspectives on the evolution of ideology, the evolution of the literary system (the relationship between literary criticism and ideology, institutions, theories and positions, tools, directions and critics, cultural mythologies, and elements of resistance), the evolution of prose and poetry, ending with a "sarcastic" reworking of the concept of the "national specificity" proposed by George Călinescu in 1941 as "transnational specificity" (11). Although Iovănel rarely uses the term multiculturalism in his work, his presentation of contemporary Romanian literature is slightly more inclusive than others in terms of genre, ethnicity, class, gender, age, etc. Yet, the impression of inclusiveness is sometimes insufficient: ethnicity means mainly Jewish and Roma; only about a fifth of the 90 works of fiction listed as representative are by women; only two

authors are showcased for children's literature; transnational literature by women writers is excluded from the framework of "transnational specificity"; travel writing is missing; transnationalism is not clearly discussed in relation to multiculturalism etc. Despite these shortcomings, the first edition of Iovănel's history is a step forward, especially because it favours less known writers and formerly excluded genres such as science fiction.

Over the past five decades, a number of works on the history of Romanian literature have been published in other languages, with the aim of integrating it into the international arena. In English, for example, the first such histories appeared before the fall of communism, as part of the state cultural strategy of internationalization: *A Concise History of Romanian Literature* by Ion Dodu Bălan, *The Personality of Romanian Literature: A Synthesis* by Constantin Ciopraga, translated by Ștefan Avădanei, and *The History of Romanian Literature* by George Călinescu, translated by Leon Levițchi. After December 1989, *The Unfinished Battles: Romanian Postmodernism Before and After 1989* by Marcel Corniș-Pope brings communist and postcommunist literature together, on a shifting literary terrain.

All these were followed by a series of articles meant to incorporate the history of Romanian literature in the international history of literature. *International Postmodernism: Theory and Literary Practice*, edited by Hans Bertens and Douwe W. Fokkema, includes articles by Matei Călinescu and Marcel Corniș-Pope. *The Literature of Post-communist Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania: A Study* by Robert Murray Davis and *The History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* by Marcel Corniș-Pope and John Neubauer have sections about the Romanian literature. *The Exile and Return of Writers from East-Central Europe*, edited by John Neubauer and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török, contains chapters on Monica Lovinescu and Paul Goma. In *From Paris to Tlön: Surrealism as World Literature*, Delia Ungureanu often refers to Romanian writers.

More recently, Romanian literary critics based in Romania have been part of publishing projects meant to further integrate local literary history and criticism in global literary projects. In the collection entitled *Romanian Literature as World Literature*, the editors Mircea Martin, Christian Moraru and Andrei Terian advocate new methodologies and approaches that can connect Romanian literature and literary criticism to world literature, in order to compensate for the excessive nationalist tendencies and reduce anachronisms. In a review about the collection, art critic Igor Mocanu questioned the types of literature considered to be eligible for international display: "Only by considering the integrality of literary history, with its democratic cultural

movements, not only with its entourage of liberal and conservative writers, could we speak about Romanian literature as world literature."[9] His conclusion hints at artistic energies that have remained untranslated, their obliteration risking to be perceived as complete absence. The 2018 collection was followed by another one: *Theory in the 'Post' Era: A Vocabulary for the 21st-century Conceptual Commons*, edited by Christian Moraru, Andrei Terian, and Alexandru Matei, in which sixteen Romanian literary critics discuss different types of aesthetics, temporalities and critical modes, taking significant steps forward and proposing a relatively new terminology of critical theory rooted in the Romanian culture and rooted in the Anglophone world.

This brief enumeration of the critical essays published in English demonstrates the existence of significant trends towards the repositioning of Romanian literature as world literature. This started during the communist regime with translations, as a form of state cultural politics, and continued with individual contributions by authors from abroad or from Romania. The exploration of these sources and the development of such trends suggests greater cultural awareness of the bidirectional circulation of theories, concepts, authors and their works between Romania and its diasporas.

Besides literary histories and essayistic writings, a number of significant comprehensive literary dictionaries and encyclopaedias have been on the market, in Romanian, over the past decades. In 1982, Mircea Zaciu made public his wish to create a dictionary that should include absolutely everything that constitutes our literature, no matter the value and hierarchies. The result was *The Dictionary of Romanian Writers* (Dicționarul scriitorilor români), a work in four volumes edited together by Mircea Zaciu, Marian Papahagi, Aurel Sasu and others. Similar efforts in this direction are *The Dictionary of Romanian Literature* (*Dicționar de literatură română*) by Marian Popa, *The Chronological Dictionary of the Romanian Novel from the Origins to 1989* (*Dicționarul cronologic al romanului românesc de la origini până la 1989*) by Ioan Milea, Ion Istrate and Mircea Popa, and *The Analytical Dictionary of Romanian Literary Works* (*Dicționar analitic de opere literare românești*) by Ion Pop. Moreover, drawing on these works and other sources, academician Eugen Simion has coordinated several major encyclopaedic publications: *The General Dictionary of Romanian Literature* (*Dicționarul general al literaturii române*) in seven volumes, with more than 7000

[9] "Numai asumând în integralitate istoria literară, cu tot cu mișcările ei culturale democratice, și nu doar cohorta liberal-conservatoare a scriitorimii, vom putea vorbi de literatura română ca literatură mondială." (online)

entries, and its shorter version, *The Dictionary of Romanian Literature* (*Dicționarul literaturii române*), in two volumes, and *The Encyclopaedia of Old Romanian Literature* (*Enciclopedia literaturii române vechi*).

The General Dictionary of Romanian Literature mentioned above tries to incorporate in seven volumes most of the authors who wrote in Romanian and illustrate Romanian culture in one way or another, no matter where and when they wrote and became known. This dictionary includes writers from all regions inhabited by Romanians, where Romanian is spoken in larger or smaller communities. The selection criteria for old times literature are more permissive, the aesthetic criteria for contemporary authors are stricter, but the general purpose is objectivity: there should be no banned authors. Therefore, since this dictionary was published in freedom, it contains many writers from the diaspora. "For the first time, I believe, we have managed to establish the map of the contemporary Romanian letters",[10] writes Simion. Paraphrasing French writer Albert Camus, he admits that all those who wrote or have written in Romanian, if they *write well* (italics in original), they serve the Romanian nation and spirituality: writers separated by history find shelter in the pages of the same dictionary because the Romanian spirituality is what unites them, so the spiritual frontiers of Romanianness are now present in a shared book (see x).

After this short overview, one small detail – yet important – must be added. "Drawing Hands" by Maurits Cornelis Escher, a lithography first printed in 1948, is the iconic picture that Nicolae Manolescu chose for illustrating his critical perspective: "let us imagine that one cuff is contemporary, simple, with ordinary buttons, while the other comes from the past, is double and has golden buttons".[11] Therefore, writing the history of literature should take into account both the past (when history writing was mainly didactic) and the present (when aesthetic criteria dominate). The metaphor of the different shirt cuffs suggests certain changes in the social structure of society, in the social status of those who write literary histories. However, the image seems fit to the critic perhaps because it also reinforces the underlying reality that the histories of Romanian literature have so far been authored or coordinated only by men.

Indeed, there are not many attempts among women literary critics to write histories of the Romanian literature. If they exist, they are rarely called

[10] "Pentru prima oară, cred, reușim să reconstituim integral harta literelor române contemporane." (viii)

[11] "să ne imaginăm că o mânecă este contemporană, simplă, cu năsturei banali, iar alta vine din trecut, este dublă și cu butoni de aur" (6).

histories: they bear other titles. There are only a handful of exceptions. For example, although she had not planned to write one, Monica Lovinescu, the daughter of famous interwar literary critic Eugen Lovinescu, made history in France, in the studios of Radio Free Europe, by reading works forbidden in Romania during communism. *A History of Romanian Literature on Shortwaves: 1960-2000* (*O istorie a literaturii române pe unde scurte: 1960-2000*) is part of her legacy, published posthumously. That the communists burnt the books of her father's library and that her mother died in detention left a significant mark on her destiny as a writer and critic. In a normal society, which cultivates cultural evolution, with tolerable political pressure, she may have continued the work of her father in Romania. But she could do so only from abroad, from a regime of increased freedom, supported by post-war radio technology. A second work worth mentioning is *The Histories of Romanian Literature* (*Istoriile literaturii române*) edited by Irina Petraș, which includes a series of articles dedicated to the development of literary criticism in Romania since the nineteenth century until the present. The articles show the existence of a community of critics, mostly male, with perspectives that rarely challenge the *status quo*. With a few exceptions, the collection focuses on the archaeology of historiography rather than on the attempts of renewal in terms of methodology.

This journey through the histories of Romanian literature demonstrates that the concept of a multicultural history of literature has been a latent work in progress for a long time and it has depended very much on the rapport between the literary domain and cultural politics, between ethics and aesthetics. Literary historians have shown how tense these relationships have been in certain epochs. The sources of these tensions and the way to deal with them properly depends on the willingness of everyone involved. Perhaps a return with new energies, relevant terminology, and fresh inspiration to book reviewing, anthology making, and other practices specific to the publishing industry will determine critics to realise how important it is to exercise literary taste in relation to works previously not approached from a multicultural point of view.

Ever since the translation of *The Western Canon* by Harold Bloom into Romanian was made in 1998, the topic of the Romanian literary canon has sparked heated debates and hundreds of articles have been published. As a result, the canon is gradually becoming a flexible transdisciplinary hermeneutical tool meant to negotiate between aesthetic criteria and the complexity of the contemporary society. In the Romanian context, a multicultural history of literature would first involve a reconsideration of the meanings of culture, history, literature, and

diversity. Whereas the first three terms have been theorised for some time and efforts have been made for successive recontextualizations, the concept of diversity is rather understudied in relation to literature: perhaps a revival of postmodernism and the development of new forms of (approaching) literature may be useful in critically addressing many of the underrepresented issues associated with diversity. For example, anthropologist Steven Vertovec included the following in his handbook of diversity studies: dimensions of diversity (gender, age, disability, race, migration, sexuality, language, religion, milieu, social structure), chronotopes of diversity (political regimes, labour, ethnicity, dwelling, boundaries), politics of diversity (government, legislation, social welfare, management), social issues (inequalities, discrimination, social cohesion, education, xenophobia, conviviality, segregation), and forms of fusion (assimilation, creolization, syncretism, intersectionality, cultural complexity, essentials for diversity literacy). Therefore, if multiculturalism is to be understood from so many perspectives and cultivated as both a political worldview and a personal lifestyle, literary history should take it into consideration as well, retaining relevant aesthetic principles Romanian critics have formulated over the past century and refining new relevant ones suitable to the circumstances of the present. The purpose of this new approach is to make the Romanian society a better place.

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LINGUISTICS AND EDUCATION

Violence and Hate Speech Against the Homeless in Social Media During the Covid-19 Pandemic[1]

María Laura PARDO[2]

1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to connect four crucial contemporary themes: violence, hate speech, extreme poverty, and Covid-19. We believe that most of the times hate speech is based on what Bourgois calls a continuum of violence, which encompasses structural, symbolic, and normalised violence. In the context of this pandemic, people who live on the streets are exposed to lack of attention and care from the State, a scarce treatment in the media, and to hatred promoted by the digital comments that many citizens make when the homeless appear in different news programs, reproduced in social media through YouTube. Here we analyse digital comments made by YouTube users concerning a report from the news program *Telenoche*, on the free-to-air television network *El Trece*, on Covid-19 and extreme poverty.

2. Violence, Hate Speech and Aporophobia

2.1. Violence

This work is part of a research whose general aim is to account for the role of discourse in relation to violence and the infringement of human and social

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rights, showing the importance of linguistic-methodological tools in the discussion of alternative mechanisms for casting some light on current problems.

Much has been discussed regarding violence and its definition. In this research, we do not pretend to trace the history of this concept; besides, there is not a univocal notion of what violence is. The taxonomies vary depending on the view one has on violence. However, we agree with the statement that "violence is a social relation characterized by the negation of the other" (Martínez Pacheco 16). Hate speech cannot be characterised as physical violence, so we will resort to the different classes of "invisible violence" as developed by Bourgois.

Bourgois states that there are three classes of invisible violence: structural, symbolic, and normalised. They are presented in a continuum that is pervaded with power, which makes them intertwine and hierarchically overlap each other at the same time, reproducing not only themselves but also the political structures of inequality that foment and propel them. Bourgois' goal is to

> call attention to them as products and mechanisms of the reproduction of the discursive and physical domination of inequality, and to highlight the bases for the punitive forms of governance in the neoliberal era, which have become more and more accepted as legitimate by the victims as much as by the perpetrators, who frequently become the agents of the destruction of their communities and of themselves. (29)

The term "structural violence" was coined by Galtung (167). This violence is shaped by identifiable institutions, relations, and force fields, such as racism, gender inequity, prison systems, and unequal exchange terms in the global market between industrialised and non-industrialised nations.

Symbolic violence was introduced by Bourdieu to refer to the mechanism by means of which socially dominated segments of the population naturalise the status quo and blame themselves for their domination, thus transforming it into something that seems legitimate and natural. Bourgois explains that insults are not by themselves symbolic violence; rather, symbolic violence is produced when the insulted believe that they deserve those insults.

Normalised violence is an adaptation of Sheper-Hughes' initial concept of everyday violence (see Sheper-Hughes and Lovell) to call attention to the indifference showed by society in the face of institutionalised brutalities.

Among other things, she was referring to the "invisible genocide" of starving children in a slum in Brazil, which becomes a legitimised routine through actions such as bureaucratic rituals, the banal procedures of medicine and the religious consolation offered to the mothers. In our country, poverty and extreme poverty are two forms of normalised violence.

2.2. *Hate Speech*

Hate speech is characteristic of virtuality and the anonymity that it enables. It is:

> a dogmatic, unjustified and destructive opinion regarding certain historically discriminated people or certain individuals as members of those groups, expressed with the aim of transmitting that destructive dogma to the interlocutor or reader and to make them participate in the task of marginalizing or excluding the hated persons. (Kaufman 140)

Hate speech refers to "unlawful, violent, destructive or threatening behaviour in which the perpetrator is wholly or in part motivated by prejudice towards the victim's perceived race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, impairment or homelessness" (Benier 180).

In social media, hate speech implies a behaviour pattern associated with a situation where power is unequally exerted by one of the participants, and manifests in the use of psychological violence in the public space. As Fumagalli (see 5) notes, unlike other forms of violence, the architecture of hate speech requires, besides a speaker and a target for hate, two groups: those who share the speaker's beliefs about the hated group and those who disagree with those beliefs. Within these groups, we can find important variations concerning the proximity (or lack thereof) to the manifested hate. This violence does not have a unique perpetrating subject; it can be indirectly aimed at another group, seeking adherence, in turn, to yet another group.

From a psychological perspective, hate "is characterized by appraisals that imply a stable perception of a person or group and thus the incapability to change the extremely negative characteristics attributed to the target of hate" (Fischer et al. 310).

Its effects raise questions on hate and its functions: why are archetypical figures like the enemy created? The enemy becomes the focus of every

destructive impulse and a social consensus on this figure is established; this consensus is negative, but, at the same time, it can produce social adherence. The effectiveness of the figure of the enemy is, precisely, in direct proportion to its capacity for producing that adherence and, at the same time, for dispelling deliberation and argumentation (see Pardo and Noblia 127). Shared hatred gives the illusion of unanimity and homogeneity.

Hate speech in social media has irreversible effects on those who produce it as much as on those who receive it, because it crystallises a violent and aggressive identity: they discover themselves not only as persons who hate, but also as having the impunity for externalising that in the face of certain discriminated groups. This way, they redefine themselves as subjects who take concrete action to hurt those groups, and they force themselves to maintain some psychological coherence with their own self-esteem (see Kaufman 126).

In the case of homeless people, there is a conjunction of classes of violence: structural, normalised, and psychological violence. The YouTube platform enables reports produced on television to be reproduced and receive comments, something that does not usually happen on television (unless the program's production allows it), thus generating hate speech towards the homeless and the readers, whether they agree with them or not.

From this perspective, hate speech can produce fear, pain, and humiliation, all of them forms of violence in its different manifestations, with no consequences in the domain of rights protected by any society. With very few exceptions, justice does not intervene in these cases. Acknowledged or not, the goal of this speech is to turn the other into a victim with the assumption that, by giving them that role, I become the perpetrator. Victimising is a transmutative action: I lose my victim condition by passing it on to another; at the same time, I become the perpetrator and thus am liberated.

According to Byung-Chul Han, "digital communication strongly erodes the community, the Us. It destroys public space and aggravates the isolation of man. What dominates digital communication is not the «love of neighbour» but narcissism" (*En el enjambre* 31). What generally prevails is "the dialectic of violence: a system that rejects the negativity of what is different develops self-destructive traits" (*La expulsión de lo distinto* 10). Zoja asserts that "after God's death, the death of the fellow man represents the disappearance of man's

second essential relation. Man falls into an essential loneliness" (23). He affirms this as a way of verifying Nietzsche's saying, which he extends to contemporary phenomena. Among these phenomena, there is the informatics revolution that replaces human presence, producing a privation of the other and thus entailing psychic damage for society.

2.3. Aporophobia and the Pandemic in the City of Buenos Aires

We are currently going through a pandemic that the World Health Organization has termed coronavirus or Covid-19. Amid the pandemic, the most vulnerable groups are exposed to neglect from the State and social mistreatment (see Matthewman and Huppatz). This is a form of aporophobia, that is, a phobia of the poor, of poverty and of what surrounds it (see Bonnet). On May 17, Ramona Medina, an activist of the Garganta Poderosa ("Powerful Throat") social organisation and of the slum known as Neighborhood 31, died from Covid-19. She had denounced the absence of assistance from the Government of the city of Buenos Aires, and the lack of water and protection supplies. She also denounced that the people living there could not observe the Preventive and Mandatory Social Isolation (ASPO) because they lived with their families in small rooms. This situation is equally grave, or graver, for those living on the streets (see Baggett et al.). The city of Buenos Aires has a number of shelters, three of which are destined to the homeless. These are: the Retiro Shelter and the Beppo Ghezzi Shelter, for men between 18 and 60 years old; and the Azucena Villaflor Shelter, for women between 18 and 60 years old, alone or with children.

In May 2020, the Government of the city of Buenos Aires decided to close the Social Inclusion Center in Retiro, a block away from Neighborhood 31, after detecting that 79 out of the 92 homeless people who stayed there were infected with Covid-19. Many of the men who stay in the shelter buy food and personal items in Neighborhood 31, which is currently one of the places with many Covid-19 cases. Although those living in the Shelter are not supposed to leave during the quarantine –or, to be able to do so, they must adopt the safety measures required by the pandemic– the massive amount of infections in the Shelter and in Neighborhood 31 prove that adequate measures were not implemented, as the majority of their inhabitants lacked the appropriate

supplies to protect themselves from the virus. Many social organisations denounced that the preventive measures were insufficient and came too late. Only on May 5, with an exponential rise of cases, the National Government together with the Government of the city of Buenos Aires carried out tests in Neighborhood 31 as part of the Detector plan. After that, the infected were moved to the city's non-hospital system and the Shelter was shut down. However, this was not the only case, for, apparently, there was a positive case in Parque Chacabuco and another in Parque Roca, where the other shelters are.

Neither the National Ministry of Health, nor the National Ministry of Social Development, nor the Government of the city of Buenos Aires shows specific protocols for homeless people on their websites. There is nothing crueller for the homeless than a campaign that asks to "Stay at home". Homeless people are excluded not only from the system, but also from the rules they cannot observe, as is the case with washing one's hands and using a face mask.

3. The Media in Relation with the Pandemic and the Homeless

Night and day, the media show news about Covid-19. Infected and deceased people, intensive care units, available beds in public and private medical systems, all of these are daily counted. However, information about the homeless is scarce. As Resende points out: "we know that the so-called 'big media' […] tend to [create] biased representations about people living in the streets" (572).

Poverty interests journalists when it is news; in this case, it interests them because Covid-19 in poor areas or in relation to the homeless can spread towards other social sectors. Despite this, it is difficult to find news reports dealing with homeless people.

Social media also reproduce what is happening on television. This way, *YouTube* acts as a catalyst for those news or reports that the television channels seek to make available for a special audience inclined to debate. This produces a new genre: the digital comment. In a general way, we can define digital comments as:

> … a-synchronic interactive exchanges that are organized in a time line, according to the order of arrival, and that are linked to a piece of news, in a

> marginal position, as a sort of footnote in the newspaper's page. Their organization and structure are similar to those of the blogs: their point of departure is a text and a space where comments are allowed. Each incoming comment can be answered in general or specifically aimed at an interlocutor through a mechanism that consists in placing an at symbol followed by the user's name. (Pardo and Noblia 122)

As many users' comments reveal, during Macri's government, news about the homeless were left to the media aligned to the left and centre-left; but later, with the arrival of Alberto Fernández's government, the media aligned to the right (which is the majority of them), like *El Trece*,[3] produced (a few) reports about the homeless as a veiled way of confronting Peronism (this is reflected in some of the comments). Thus, a dispute can be observed between the authors of the comments, a dispute that goes beyond what the report may convey in a superficial analysis. The target is not only the homeless, but also the present or previous government.[4]

For example, the following comment aims at the present government of Alberto Fernández, arguing that it takes more care of those with money that travel to Miami than of the homeless:

> Marcelo Oviedo. 2 months ago. 'And the government, instead of taking those people and accommodating them in places so that they don't face any risks, spends millions to send an empty airplane to Miami to bring back stupid people that left in spite of the warnings and accommodates them in hotels to keep them in quarantine, stupid people with money… That's what we have.'

Other comment authors aim at the ex-president Mauricio Macri's government instead:

> Glak Ro. 2 months ago. Now channel 13 worries about the homeless, accomplices in the sacking, malnatti[5] I saw you hugging the PROs[6]
>
> Nico Magnetto. 2 months ago: thanks to Macri

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3 *El Trece* is a national television channel that belongs to the Clarín Group and opposes the *Frente de Todos* (to which president Alberto Fernández belongs), a coalition of center-left Kirchnerism (the Peronist-oriented current that governed Argentina from 2003 to 2015).

4 The previous government is that of Mauricio Macri, representing the right-oriented opposition to Alberto Fernández's government.

5 Malnatti is the journalist who makes the report.

6 The PRO is Mauricio Macri's political party.

> Luciano Spagna. 2 months ago: Telenoche stop making politics in this moment!!! larreta[7] has to assume responsibility or isn't he the macrist head of government?? Where is larreta???

Although here we will focus on hate speech and violence, it is fair to point out that, besides these discourses, there are also supporting comments and others that express sadness for the situation of those who live on the streets. For example:

> Verónica Kohn. 2 months ago: Poor people… they should give them paid jobs from the State.
>
> Issasuba. 2 months ago: The citizens, when they go shopping to the supermarket, WE HAVE THE MORAL OBLIGATION to bring them food… We cannot keep on in life looking away. Let's share! Excellent deliver by Telenoche. You have moved me. Here in Mendoza several citizens do it. Even if it is a boiled egg. Even if it is some cookies. Thank you for RAISING AWARENESS.

4. Methodology and linguistic theories

To carry out the linguistic analysis, I will use the Synchronic-Diachronic Method for the Linguistic Analysis of Texts (SDMLAT) (see Pardo). The SDMLAT is both a basic theory and a method and has been used in other languages such as English (see Pardo and Lorenzo-Dus; Prendergast) and Portuguese (see Resende and Marchese; Santos). Through the SDMLAT, discursive categories are inductively obtained. These categories shape the way in which social subjects know and order the world. Thus, *categorising* is the process by means of which an individual assigns a series of properties to another individual, object or situation. These are the properties that discursively build that object, situation, or individual. The SDMLAT is "relative to meaning" (Pardo, 69) because it is oriented to what the discourse intends to communicate (rather than to an exclusively syntactic-grammatical view).

The result of the categorising operation –that is, what is considered a completed categorisation– does not emerge from a linear process of analysis, but from successive processes of revision and re-categorisation. Revision and re-categorisation are essential because they prevent the researcher's own

[7] Larreta is the Head of Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

categorisation from interfering in the analysis. This analytical process is called double hermeneutic.

The nature of the discursive categories is *grammaticalised* or *semantic-discursive*. The *grammaticalised categories* are *Pragmatic Operator* (*PO*), *Speaker-Protagonist* (*S-P*), *Actor/s*, *Value Nexus* (VN), *Time* and *Space*. These categories are compulsory in the use of language because a sender cannot do without them in the construction of discourse. Therefore, they have a high frequency of appearance in different genres and always maintain the same discursive function. Unlike *grammaticalised* categories, *semantic-discursive* categories concern the particular universe of meaning in each discourse and, therefore, express its more creative aspects. For this reason, they also have a greater degree of variability. Both grammaticalised and semantic-discursive categories constitute the way in which people represent their vision of the world in discourse. The grammaticalized categories are defined as follows:

– ***Speaker-Protagonist (S-P):*** any pronominal person or nominal referent that assumes the text's central argument, from which other arguments are developed through the *Actor* category/ies.
– ***Value Nexus 1 (VN1):*** it manifests the actions and states related to the *Speaker-Protagonist* category. It can correspond to a verb as well as to a nominalisation.
– ***Actor/s:*** any pronominal person or nominal referent that takes the opposite argument to the one developed through the *Speaker-Protagonist* category.
– ***Value Nexus 2, 3… (VN2, VN3…):*** they manifest the actions and states related to the *Actor* category/ies. They can correspond to a verb as well as to a nominalisation.
– ***Time*** and ***Space:*** the *Time* and *Space* categories respond to the spatial-temporal orientation inherent to any text.
– ***Pragmatic Operator (PO):*** it has different functions, like telling the listener or reader how to interpret an utterance,[8] connecting utterances or challenging or questioning the listener or reader.

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[8] An *utterance* is defined as a unit of analysis for language in use that is lesser than discourse. It is delimited by the concurrence of the following criteria: pauses and intonation (in oral speech), the presence of different punctuation marks (in writing), and the complete realisation of a theme and a rheme (in both) (Pardo, 1996; 2011).

- ***Negation (Neg.):*** it is a "floating" category; for example, it can appear negating a verb (*I do not want to*) or a word (*unnecessary*), and it does not have the same degree of compulsiveness as the other categories.

As the name of the method (*Synchronic-Diachronic* Method) shows, the result of its application makes it possible to examine discourse synchronically (in the successive occurrence of utterances) and diachronically (how the categories are semantically charged during the unfolding of discourse). These two readings are illustrated in Figure 1. Moreover, the SDMLAT includes the examination of categorical displacements, which is called *Theory of displacements*. This theory involves considering how movements from one category to another are produced, to account for the cognitive associations between categories that the subjects make and express in their discourses.

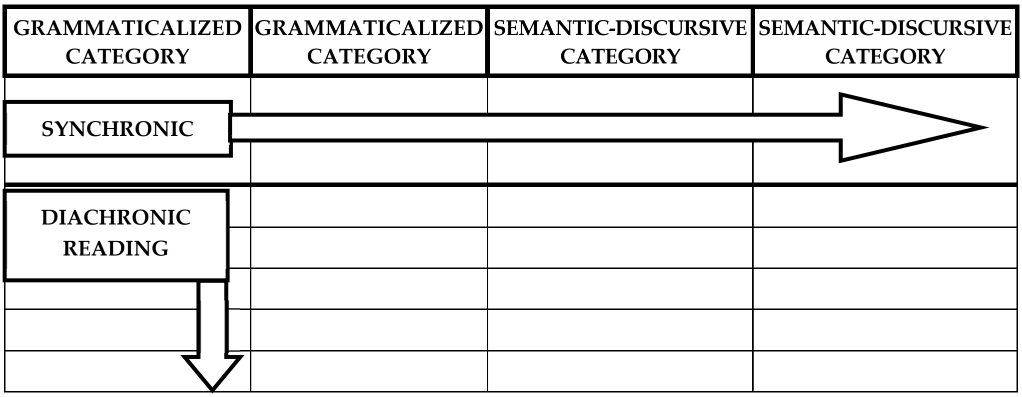


Figure 1. Synchronic and diachronic readings (Pardo, et al. 2020)

4.1. Information hierarchisation

The theory of information hierarchisation (see Pardo, 2011), inspired by the Prague School (see Weil 1844; Mathesius; Firbas), is added to the SDMLAT. From this theory, we will only retain here the notion of *focus*. In languages like Spanish, the focus is the final part of the utterance, which is perceived by the listener/s or reader/s as the most relevant section in the informative plane, independently of the notions of theme and rheme in the utterance.

4.2. Tonalisation

Tonalisation is a theory that addresses the problem of information hierarchisation within the utterance and enables to visualise the linguistic resources that help to reinforce or mitigate what one intends to communicate (see Lavandera; Pardo, 2011).

As previously noted, these are the theories that will be taken into consideration for the analysis. In the examples, categories – whether grammaticalised or semantic-discursive– appear in italics, and focuses appear underlined.

5. Corpus Selection

This work analyses the comments to the report: *Coronavirus: the invisible [people] that face the quarantine [while] living on the streets*, uploaded to YouTube by *Telenoche*,[9] *El Trece* Channel, on Tuesday March 24, 2020 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCj2vbK6Bu4&t=92s).

The news clip lasts 3′53′′ and it has 616 comments. We have extracted the comments that refer to homeless people, leaving aside those that allude to the journalist or to the report itself. The report shows journalist Daniel Malnatti interviewing people who live on the streets of the city of Buenos Aires. Because our object of study is circumscribed to the comments, the whole report cannot be reproduced here, but we have gathered all the headlines that appear on the screen so that the report presented by the news program becomes more accessible. The headlines are: *The invisible [people] who now are alone <u>on the streets</u>. The roofless are also <u>afraid</u>. Before, they ate from what was given to them by <u>the shops</u>. The image laid bare by <u>the quarantine</u>. We have to look for food <u>in the [litter] bins</u>. They cannot stay <u>at home</u>. Today you realize that there are many people living <u>on the streets</u>.*

As it is clear, the report aims at pointing out that the quarantine (focalised) imposed by the government makes the homeless' difficult situation even more visible, as they lack the shops' help (focalised) and have no houses to stay safe from Covid-19 (focalised). The position adopted here by the news program calls our attention, as this is not one of its usual topics of interest. However, it becomes a topic of interest in order to oppose the quarantine,

[9] *Telenoche* is the channel's primetime (nocturnal) news program.

which is one of the causes promoted by the channel. In this particular case, as no claims are made about this point, the report indirectly –yet maybe unconsciously– shows the State's absence in relation to the homeless during the pandemic. There are no protocols, and there are no effectively conducted campaigns to bring alcohol gel and masks to the homeless. The headlines serve as a synthesis of the editorial line that the channel intends to make clear with this report; they do not resume the homeless' words in any way.

6. Linguistic analysis

We will now present the analysis of the digital comments:

> Argie87 – 2 months ago
> Coronavirus fears them[10]

Table 1.

S-P / disease	VN1	Actor
1 [Coronavirus	fears	them]

In this comment, we can observe what Over calls "dehumanization", when non-human qualities are attributed to stigmatised groups. When the person who wrote this comment points out that the Coronavirus fears them, they portray homeless people as entities that are more powerful or more dangerous than the virus. Coronavirus is the protagonist of this comment (see the *Speaker-Protagonist* category); on the other hand, we have "them", the homeless, in the focal position. This way, an argumentative and representational counterpoint is created between the Coronavirus and the people who live on the streets, whereby fear is displaced and "personifies" the virus, assigning it resistance (people who live on the streets survive anything) and the supposed destruction that is attributed to the homeless. Thus, fear becomes something the virus "feels" about the homeless. It is a case of hate speech that promotes a vision of the homeless as very fearsome and dangerous subjects for society, while also placing them in the focal position.

[10] Comments are presented exactly as they appear on YouTube, with their typos, syntax or any other kind of errors, in order to respect language in use.

In the following comment by Mar S, the idea "whatever [else] they may be" is reinforced. The "whatever [else]" reveals the derogatory aspect of this comment:

> Mar S – 2 months ago
> I'm far away if I don't have any problem with helping whatever [else] they may be they are humans. But well I respect every opinion.

Table 2.

S-P	VN1	Space	Connector	Problem	Actor 1/ homeless	VN2	Actor 2/ others
1 [I	'm	far away	if				
I	don't have			any problem with			
	helping				whatever [else] they	may be	
					they	are	
					humans.]		
			2 [But well				
I	respect						every opinion.]

Here we find another polarisation between the "I" in the *Speaker-Protagonist* position and "every opinion" in the *Actor/s* category in utterance 2, which refers to the opinion of other people who write comments; and "them" (people living on the streets, corresponding to the *Actor/s* 1 category) who are "like humans", with "are humans" placed in the focal position. Besides, the verb connected with the characterisation of homeless people is in the present tense of the subjunctive mode [in Spanish: *sean*, here translated as "may be"], indicating there is a probability that they are human. Although the subjunctive mode is a mitigating resource, here this tinge reinforces the doubt about their humanity.

The link between indigence and drugs is very frequent in these comments. In part, this emerges from the fact that many researchers account for this situation. "The paths" that lead to homelessness, as many authors have called them (see Christiani et al.; Anderson and Tulloch; Crane; Fitzpatrick; Clapham), can be attributed to five causes: "a home crisis", "familial breakdown", "substance abuse", "mental health" and a rapid conversion

"from young to adult", according to Chamberlain and Johnson (61). Similarly, Sayago points out that "one [trait] is the tendency towards drug addiction, which appears very markedly in the figure of the marginal teenage criminal in Buenos Aires (specially, the addiction to *paco*)" (12). However, this is no reason to believe that, in an underdeveloped system like the Argentinian system, these are the main and only causes; and even less, that they justify the violence of hate speech.

In their comment, La cotorra rd refers to the connection between living on the streets and drugs:

> La cotorra rd – 2 months ago
> Most of them are *piperos* [pipers] that is why they have no place

Table 3.

S-P/ Drugs	VN1	Connector	Street
[Most of them	are		
piperos that		is why	
They	have		no place

"Most of them" (the people living on the streets) takes the role of the *Speaker-Protagonist*, which is characterised by the adjective "pipero"[11] (note the use of the obligatory predicative complement "are pipero" [Spanish: *son pipero*]). This is followed by the causal connector "that is why" (Spanish: *por*), which supposedly justifies why they are on the streets. The anaphoric connector "that" (Spanish: *eso*) brings the fact that they are considered drug addicts back to the forefront. This way, the *Speaker-Protagonist* category is argumentatively opposed to the *Street* category, which is a grammaticalised *Space* category realised through the term "no place", placed in the focal position. In the line of thought of the author of this comment, the reasons why these people are on the streets are narrowed down to the fact that they are drug addicts, which would supposedly annihilate all forms of empathy.

In the next example, Ezequiel Flores argues in the same direction but with more complexity, as a political tone is added to the drug theme by alluding to government subsidies.

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[11] Those who take *paco* are called "piperos", because that drug must be lit and smoked. It is made out of the remains of cocaine and is considered very addictive and unhealthy.

Ezequiel Flores – 2 months ago

All of them *paqueros* they are in the street by their own choice or because of the vices, but when they go to collect the subsidies then they don't have any problems [and they go] directly to the dealer

Table 4.

S-P/ Vices	VN1	Street	Connector	State	Time
[All of them *paqueros* they	are	in the street			
by their own choice					
or because of the vices,			but when		
They	go to collect			the subsidies	then
They	don't have				
any problems					
directly to the dealer]					

Here again, we have a *Speaker-Protagonist* category that refers to the "vices" and has references to the "paqueros"[12] and to "the dealer" (in Spanish: *tranza*). "Directly to the dealer" is placed in the focal position, highlighting the theme of the vices. We also have the *Street* category, which is a grammaticalised *Space* category, realised through the lexemes "in the street" (as we saw in the previous example); and this is followed by the semantic-discursive category *State*, realised through "the subsidies", and an adverb, "then", that refers to the moment when these people have to go to collect the State's social subsidies. The utterance is divided in two temporal axes by the connector "but" and the adverb "when": what happens during the course of their lives, that is, drug taking; and what they do when they collect money from social subsidies, that is, buying more drugs from the dealer. The comment thus marks, on the one hand, the uselessness of collecting social subsidies so that the homeless have food, clothes, or other things; and on the other hand, the circularity in which homeless people supposedly live, as they collect social subsidies only to take more drugs. It is a critique of the political system that gives subsidies to allegedly "invest in vices". This is a frequent argument in certain right-wing political and social groups.

[12] "Paqueros" is a Spanish term for those who take the drug *paco*.

Finally, this last example shows clearly how hate speech circulates:

Natalia Vazquez Luján – 2 months ago
The people who are out and about in the street would that they die and no longer steal

Table 5.

S-P	VN1	Street	Time
[The people who	are out and about	in the street	
	would that		
They	die		and no longer
	steal]		

In this example, we see that the *Speaker-Protagonist* category is realised by "the people" and the relative "who" and "they" pronouns that refer to "the people"; then we have the *Value Nexus 1* category with the verb "are out and about", which gives the homelessness an impression of movement and a sort of voluntary action: they are not on the streets, they decide to "be out and about" on the streets. There is also the verb "would that", which is a wishful expression from the comment's author –that those people died (it could then be considered a Value Nexus 2)–, in the potential tense of the indicative mode, which mitigates its semantic value as it is a very strong assertion (let them die). This is followed by the connector "and" and the expression "no longer", marking the urgency of the wish: that they stop stealing. In Spanish, the verb in the expression translated here as "no longer steal" ("ya no *anden* robando") is in contrast with the verb translated as "to be out and about" (*andan*): the first is in the present tense of the indicative mode and the second in the present tense of the subjunctive. This counterpoint makes it clear that, for the author of this comment, the homeless are out and about in the street possibly to commit robbery (a tinge given by the subjunctive), although this is placed in the focal position to reinforce that belief.

In these examples, which are few but representative of the axes adopted by prejudice against the homeless, different representations of the poor take shape: 1) from an ontological perspective, they are represented as a virus, dehumanised and objectified in relation to negative traits linked to decease; and they are associated with vice (drugs), which also dehumanises them; 2) from a legal perspective, they are associated with the illicit (the actions are

stealing or taking advantage of social subsidies), and 3) from a political perspective, they are metonymically associated to the State that assists them, but of which the homeless take advantage. For all these reasons, hate speech justifies that the fate deserved by the homeless is death (an assertive form of expression of violence and the destruction of the other).

7. Conclusions

The research shows, on the one hand, that even if the news program draws attention to the homeless during the pandemic, it has an editorial line that pursues a political goal rather than appealing to television viewers' or YouTube commentators' empathy with the homeless. On the other hand, it shows that hate speech aimed at the homeless is strongly present in digital comments, with the prejudice that the right-wing media reproduce in their radio and television programs: the homeless are drug addicts, lazy, dirty, and they are fearsome criminals, to the point of deserving death.

This stereotyped vision has become unusually stronger in recent years; neoliberalism has deepened a sort of conservative thought, inclined towards easy assertions with virtually no arguments – and, when arguments are present, they are Manichaean, with no space for in-betweens or empathy. Consequently, argumentation occurs by confronting two representations or categories: the *Speaker-Protagonist* (the homeless), characterised, among other things, as *Vice* or *Drugs*, is confronted with the *Street* category, which continues to be a grammaticalised *Space* category that marks the situation of the homeless, also called "planeros" (a pejorative name for someone who collects a social subsidy) or fearsome subjects.

These forms of representation are not only directed at the homeless, but also at the people who make comments. The latter have some things in common, like sharing prejudice. This way, hate speech is strengthened by a sort of ongoing mutual repetition that reinforces its assumptions. This circularity gives the impression –to the group itself as well as to the unaware outsider– that there are a great number of people who make up the haters' group.

The Covid-19 has not made some people feel empathy with others who are in a vulnerable situation. Different forms of violence intertwine, but undoubtedly the one that prevails in these discourses is the negation of the other. Thus, the homeless are not just those who carry delinquency, drugs, and

vagrancy; now, they are also carriers of the coronavirus who threaten citizenship with something else, to such a degree that the virus itself fears them. The isolation policy established by the National Government and, especially, by the Government of the city of Buenos Aires, seems to have overlooked that being on the streets (or lacking access to water) implies a very powerful form of institutional violence, because it forces homeless people to violate the protocols for the prevention of Covid-19: they cannot wash their hands, they cannot avoid being in contact with the virus. They are left outside of the law, compelled and unprotected, unable to observe it. This was what characterised Ramona's case.

The presence of homeless people in the media reveals the need for the spectacularisation (see Debord; González Requena; Hoynes) of poverty, a trait of postmodernity whereby the poor are presented (on television and YouTube) as a "minority that usually engages in criminal activities, producing fear and insecurity feelings in the audience. Thus, in the Argentinian context, the spectacle reflects and builds a sort of morbid voyeurism, typical of postmodernity, where watching the poor being described as criminals and 'bizarre' has become an aesthetic experience" (see Pardo and Buscaglia). This experience helps to displace society's own fears of something that is supposedly alien and only watched from afar. The report also reveals –even if not intentionally– the perversity of a State that demands and produces norms for groups that do not include the homeless. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbates this social fear of the homeless, and unmasks, very cruelly, the inequalities we live in.

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Multiculturality and Discourse Awareness in the Media

Elizabeth WOODWARD-SMITH[1]

1. Introduction

This article examines a number of recent news items from the British media which reveal growing awareness of changing linguistic and social usage. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will underpin the theoretical approach, combined with Critical Language Awareness (CLA), considering the social practice of language, different discourse choices and strategies in order to discover challenges to power relations, ideologies or current customs. Van Dijk describes the focus of CDA as the ways in which "discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society" (2001, 353). The approach represented by CDA offers a perspective on culture, ideology, or social problems, and can promote social action. CDA typically examines questions related to class, gender, race, discrimination, institutions, and social structure, among other issues (see 354). These are in fact some of the topics found in the media examples presented in this article, and they will be described and critically assessed through close analysis of their implications and the reactions they provoke.

There can be no doubt that cultural stereotypes are being questioned in the British media on a daily basis, with social diversity being highlighted in an attempt to examine alternatives resulting in more inclusive language. Changes

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in usage are constantly being proposed, consisting of preference for neutral instead of marked expressions, avoidance of negatively charged terminology, sexist language, or even whole semantic fields. However, increased awareness does not always lead to unanimity on proposed changes in usage and its socio-cultural implications, mainly because, as Henry and Tator point out, following van Dijk (1988), language can never be neutral "because it bridges our personal and social worlds" (25), and because discourse is identified by the social context of its use, by who uses it, and in what kind of situations or conditions it appears. There are thus several factors to consider when evaluating levels of awareness and suggested solutions to problematic or uncomfortable sociolinguistic issues. This article will examine some proposed alternatives for divisive or inappropriate language dealt with in the media, and reactions to established patterns of usage in an increasingly sensitive multicultural environment.

Discourse carries social meanings and it is associated with and shaped by concepts of power reflecting certain interests (see Henry and Tator 25). Examination of the examples offered in this article will show that established patterns are being questioned by those not belonging to traditional elites, but rather to sectors of society who, for one reason or another, have been until now at the margins of discourse interchange. The examples presented here are only a small number of the many appearing almost daily in the online press, and in order to deal with them as efficiently as possible, we have classified them into five broad topic areas.

2. Health and well-being issues
3. Commercial jargon; corporatese
4. Contact with nature
5. Male and female language
6. Culture, ethnicity, and colonialism

Each example is based on a headline and includes quotes from the respective items, together with a commentary on the reasons for the topic being highlighted by the press, solutions offered to remedy negative situations, and the reactions of language users to any proposed new usage.

2. Health and well-being issues

According to a UK poll by the charity Macmillan Cancer Support, most patients with cancer ask people not to refer to them using terms such as “fighter”, “warrior”, or “hero”, because instead of being uplifting, such words are seen as inappropriate (Cancer Clichés). Among other inadequate terms found in the media and on social networks are “cancer-stricken” and “victim”. Referring to a person’s cancer diagnosis as a “war” or a “battle” leads to expressions such as “lost their battle” or “lost their fight”, implying that the patient who dies is a loser, or even did not try hard enough. The survey found a preference for factual words to describe cancer, and its diagnosis and outcome. Some participants called the negatively loaded terminology “cancer-speak”, and indicated that it puts pressure on newly diagnosed patients. They do not wish to be called “inspirational” or “brave” because that is not how they see themselves. The issue of language choice shows a lack of sensitivity by people who think they are being sympathetic, but who are in fact using offensive language from the point of view of cancer patients. Articles published in medical journals also criticize battle metaphors to refer to cancer because specialists say that they undermine cancer treatment and prevention, and do not increase vigilance (see Hauser and Schwarz). One insensitive online headline stated “Finance analyst battling breast cancer found hanged alongside drowned son” (Shipman). As if the report on a suicidal mother taking the life of her seven-year-old son were not already tragic enough, the journalist chose to use the battle cliché to describe the woman. Similarly, the musician Eddie Van Halen was reported as having “lost his long and arduous battle with cancer” (Novak). The result is that such metaphors are not conducive to a positive mindset about treatment for cancer, and can lead to fatalistic beliefs about cancer and its prevention.

Fat-shaming is another sensitive issue which has received attention in the media: “Calling people ‘obese’ is hurtful, claim top psychologists who say the correct term is ‘living with obesity’ because the condition is NOT a choice [sic]” (Matthews). According to a report by the British Psychological Society, the appropriate language is still being debated, but they prefer a person (living) with obesity rather than an obese person (see Robertson). In an advert for Airbnb, the advertisers of a property stipulated certain rules, for example no smoking, or no

loud music after 10 pm, but they also specified a weight limit of 100 kilos for "bigger than average" holidaymakers, because their fifteenth-century cottage was small, with ancient wooden beams and floors. The result was that Airbnb obliged them to remove their advert for being "fat-phobic" (Coffey). The advertisers argued that they were legitimately trying to protect the property from avoidable damage. They used neither the term "obese", nor "overweight" and much less "fat", but the mere implication of a certain weight limit caused them to have to withdraw their advert from the Internet site due to the numerous complaints received. In this example, it was not the choice of vocabulary which caused an uproar, but rather the concept of banning anyone with certain physical characteristics.

In December 2020 the British military were called in to collaborate with the NHS in setting up Covid-19 vaccination sites and in the delivery of vaccines. An interesting change in terminology was reported during the implementation of logistics. According to a military source "We've been banned from using the words 'mass testing'. We've got to use 'community testing' because it sounds more friendly. Mass testing sounds a bit apocalyptic, a bit concentration camp" (Fisher and Bodkin). Indeed, "mass" compounds tend to refer to negative concepts: "mass production", "mass murderer", or "mass grave" spring to mind. "Mass testing" or "mass vaccination" could be interpreted as something being carried out indiscriminately, without considering the different needs of patients. It is not known where the order came from, but it does show a degree of linguistic and cultural sensitivity, even though the priority was hopefully to provide the logistical means to an end.

Changes in terminology concerning prisons have caused disagreement, as seen in the following headline and its article: "Prisoners rebranded as 'residents' by jail bosses to help rehabilitation" (Hymas). Some prisons have opted to refer to those serving sentences in them as "residents", while the term "offenders" has been replaced by "supervised individuals". The intention of proponents is to avoid labelling people and to help them to move on from lives of crime. In one prison in Wales, cells are now called "rooms", prison blocks are referred to as "communities", and holding cells are "waiting rooms". However, some former prison governors criticise this tendency as merely something "fashionable" which fails to force offenders to take responsibility for their crimes (see Hymas). The theory behind the renaming is part of an on-going attempt to modernise prisons and focus efforts on rehabilitation, through a

government-funded project to assess whether rebranding, and redesigning prisons could reduce reoffending. However, a former prison governor and government advisor on extremism in jails claimed that "You can't change people's lives and stop them making further victims with labels", while a probation service spokesman explained that their focus is on keeping the public safe from dangerous offenders "regardless of the terminology" (Hymas). No results from the project have been published so far, but more consultation might be needed with the people directly involved in the daily functioning of prisons and the probation service, rather than merely assigning new labels for old, as part of what would appear to be a long-term project.

Discrimination can be detected in many forms: "Hair salon told it 'cannot advertise for a happy stylist'" (Hair salon). *"Part-time fully qualified hairdresser, must be confident in barbering as well as in all aspects of hairdressing. This is a busy, friendly, small salon, so only happy, friendly stylists need apply."* A Department of Work and Pensions official contacted the owner of the hairdresser's because they said that it "discriminated against unhappy people". The owner thought at first that it was a joke, but the official told her that "happy" was among a list of discriminatory terms not to be used in job adverts. Indeed, under the UK Equality Act of 2010, it is unlawful for employers to discriminate against job applicants because of a "protected characteristic", namely *age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.* There is also a ban on rules or working conditions that disadvantage particular groups. However, the DWP later apologised for their mistake and published the original advert including the disputed word, because they recognised that "happy" or "unhappy" are not on the list of proscribed terms.

After complaints received by the Sainsbury's supermarket chain, a household item was removed from its shelves. The offending item was a mug bearing a phrase and image from *Matilda.* The news article (see Sawer and Samuel) was headlined "Domestic abuse campaigners force Sainsbury's to remove Roald Dahl 'hit her' mug", the inscription on the mug being, "A brilliant idea HIT HER" [sic]. The complaint was that the two words in capital letters could be interpreted as trivializing domestic abuse, and could invite men to assault women. Opponents to removal claimed that the quoted words simply mean that someone suddenly had a brilliant idea, and that they could not be interpreted as "A brilliant idea: hit her!" They expressed the hope that supermarket chiefs would be capable of resisting this "idiocy" (Andrews), but

campaigners insisted that the quote was ambiguous and therefore inappropriate. From a pragmatic point of view the phrase has several disambiguating factors: 'hit' clearly performs the action of the subject 'idea', and the lack of any punctuation, such as the protesters' suggested colon, between 'idea' and 'hit' reinforces this link; 'hit' is obviously not an imperative form if the two previous factors are taken into consideration; and in addition, the context provided by the image taken from the book shows no sign of violence from a man (or a woman). However, since this was a negative publicity issue for the supermarket, they decided to withdraw the mug, and apologised for any upset caused to customers.

3. Commercial jargon and corporatese

There is a growing tendency for HR departments to publish adverts which confuse or discourage applicants because the job descriptions contain vague jargon which is difficult to interpret. Up to 50% of university graduates are dissuaded from applying for jobs because of ambiguous language. An article entitled "Jargon-filled job adverts a 'major barrier' stopping people applying for jobs" (Jargon-filled), offered as an example of obscure job description "acting as POC for enquiries" (*point of contact*). According to a survey carried out by the graduate job site Milkround (Faragher) the adverts they collected required candidates to be familiar with expressions such as "blue-sky thinking" (*unlimited creativity*), "brand architecture" (*product dominant models*), "low-hanging fruit" (*easily achievable short-term goals*), or "open the kimono" (*reveal what is planned*). The survey also found that 71% of graduates claimed that business acronyms such as "SLA, "DOE" and "B2B"[2] were confusing, leaving them feeling inadequately qualified (Faragher), and therefore they either refrained from applying, or went to the interview lacking confidence. Those responsible for the survey claimed that business jargon "makes people feel oppressed in the workplace", and that "jargon-infested recruitment advertising" is keeping talented candidates away (see Faragher). Their recommendation was that "it's time to cancel the buzzwords and try saying what we really mean". In pre-Internet times, job adverts in the press had to be expressed in the minimum number of characters possible in order to

[2] SLA: Service-level agreement; DOE: Depends on Experience; B2B: Business-to-business.

minimise the cost, which could have led to incomprehensibility due to the brevity, but ironically, with today's modern, unlimited advertising means, the language has become jargon, or corporatese, excluding the uninitiated from comprehension and job opportunities. The level of confusion is such that Milkround has created an online "jargon decoder" to offer help to job candidates, and guidance to employers on how to make job adverts clearer and more concise. However, businesses are not the only ones guilty of ambiguous terms, since politicians regularly substitute terms for negative outcomes for more positive-sounding alternatives: "challenges" (*problems*), "cost-savings" (*cuts*), "operational difficulties" (*failure, breakdowns*), and in the context of Covid-19, the introduction of a "circuit-breaker" (*lockdown*), which gave the impression of it being a mechanism to automatically switch off the spread of the coronavirus. Although these are not exactly jargon, they are a kind of political "spin", seeking to give a better impression of undesirable facts by hiding the truth.

4. Contact with nature

According to research on linguistic corpora carried out by the University of Leeds, in the 1990s references to "field" always meant grass or farmland, but in the 2010s, references to "field" meant grass or farmland in only 70% of cases. Similarly, in the 1990s "stream" always meant a small river, while in the 2010s it only referred to a small river in 36% of cases (Nature's language). In connection with these findings, the National Trust[3] states that one in four parents and grandparents are worried about children losing the original meanings of words referring to nature. However, researchers argue that new technology is abstract and can be difficult to understand, and therefore simple, vivid words can help to express concepts harder to explain. An example of how a complex process can be understood is through the term "stream" when it is used to represent information flowing into electronic devices. Words such as "tweet" or "cloud" once inspired visions of the countryside, but now they are synonymous with the technological world. Research on the changing usage of

[3] National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty: A charity funded by membership fees and aid from different grants.

words related to nature reveals that when companies choose brand names from nature (Apple, the North Face, Amazon, Nectar, Orange), they are aligning their products with objects that sound familiar, natural and good (Nature's language). Researchers also found that monosemic nature words, such as "lawn", "twig", "blackbird", "fishing", "paddle", "sand", "paw" and "shell", have decreased in their frequency of use in young people's conversation, and some, such as "bumblebee" have disappeared completely. Representatives of the National Trust have responded to these findings by observing that "as a nation we are losing our connection with nature" (Nature's language). They recommend strengthening contacts with 'real' nature so as to ensure its benefits to our wellbeing, bringing increased happiness, self-esteem, and reduced anxiety. Presumably, this would help to save natural environment words from 'extinction'. However, we would argue that usage depends on our activities, and that it is obvious that young people today no longer spend their summer holidays enjoying a "paddle" on a chilly British beach, collecting "shells", or "fishing" for tiny creatures in rock pools as their parents and grandparents did, causing the vocabulary of leisure to change drastically in the last decades. Those responsible for the study on the use of nature words claim that changes in meaning are neither good nor bad, since words already often have multiple meanings, and disambiguation is always possible in a context[4]. We can conclude that changes are part of an inevitable process: society's decreasing contact with nature and its greater dependence on technology are together leading to linguistic adaptation and some loss of primary meanings.

5. Male and female language

At the Thames Water company[5], "masculine coded" phrasing of recruitment adverts was eliminated in 2020 because it was perceived as off-putting by female applicants. They removed terms such as "competitive",

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[4] For polysemic possibilities of combining technology with natural vocabulary see "My Blackberry isn't working", at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ii0PNk4DjQs Accessed 10 March 2021.

[5] The UK's largest water and wastewater services company.

"confident", and "champion", and replaced them with more inclusive "feminine" terms instead, offering a "welcome to those wanting to learn", or looking for "team players" (Oppenheim). According to Equality Now[6], a non-government organisation, "Language matters. Words reflect cultural norms and maintain social realities" (Oppenheim). This was confirmed by a study examining adverts for male-dominated and female-dominated job types (see Gaucher et al 2011), in which it was found that though the wording respected legislation avoiding requests for candidates of a particular sex, there were more subtle clues pointing to character traits and gender stereotypes. Words such as "support", "understand", and "interpersonal" were found to be associated with female stereotypes, while "dominant" or "leader" corresponded to male stereotypes. It was suggested that including gendered words in job adverts could make the posts seem less appealing to a certain gender, thereby reducing the range of applicants. Since changing the wording in the job adverts, the proportion of female applicants for sewage work technicians at the British water supplier rose from 8% to 46%, proving that the work is not inherently masculine, and that language does indeed make a difference to the perception of male and female jobs. An Equality Now representative quoted in the news item added that "there is growing awareness of the negative impact that gendered language can have, and an understanding that un-gendering language has an important role to play in tackling sexism". This awareness is not by any means new, though its application might be slow to take effect; the Equality Act of 2010 (UK) states that job adverts are not allowed to advertise specifically for males or females, or use he/she pronouns. However, as Gaucher et al. point out, subtle language differences in how jobs are described "may help explain the on-going gender gap in historically male-dominated fields".

A gender-neutral approach is being adopted by at least one London jewellers where they have decided to remove the term "bridal jewellery" from their catalogue and website (Carpani). In addition, they have stopped gendering engagement rings by using the possessive "her" when referring to

[6] Equality Now was founded in 1992, aiming to promote equal rights for men and women under the law.

ring sizes online. They have decided to advertise “engagement” or “wedding” rings”, or simply “commitment rings” for those not intending to marry. By avoiding a marked term such as “bridal”, the vendors achieve inclusivity, and presumably reach more potential clients.

6. Culture, ethnicity, and colonialism

“Honours committee is planning to remove ‘Empire’ from OBE and MBE after Black Lives Matter movement highlighted links to slavery” (Tanno). The committee in charge of choosing candidates to receive honours or medals such as MBE, OBE, CBE, BEM[7], are considering removing the word “empire” from their denominations because, according to the news report, it represents imperialism and colonialism, and this is a result of the prominence of the BLM movement and public opinion. In recent years a number of high-profile figures have turned down honours due to their imperial symbolism. Since the British Empire ceased to exist after the Second World War, rewording the names of the awards would seem to be somewhat overdue. Others would prefer the introduction of a new medal “that better reflects a more diverse 21st-century Britain”, while the Cabinet states it is “committed to ensuring the honours system represents UK society” (Tanno) but has no immediate plans for renaming the awards.

This issue arose in the wake of moves to review place names, remove statues and relabel museum legacies after BLM anti-racism rallies. The philosopher David Hume was a leading 18th-century figure of the Scottish enlightenment, but his views on race, expressed 250 years ago, are reported in the press as causing distress to modern students. In view of a student petition, the University of Edinburgh has decided to rename the building bearing his name as simply “40 George Square”, although university authorities recognise that his comments on matters of race were “not uncommon at the time” (Maishman). Similarly, a student-inspired action plan has asked for the removal of George Bernard Shaw’s name from London’s Royal Academy of

[7] CBE: Commander of the British Empire; OBE: Officer of the Order of the British Empire; MBE: Member of the Order of the British Empire; BEM: British Empire Medal.

Dramatic Art (RADA) theatre, because of Shaw's beliefs on race, eugenics, and fascism. In addition, the plan calls for the removal of "all paintings, sculptures, pictures and room names that celebrate racist figures" (Singh). Shaw, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1925, was one of the earliest members of RADA's council in 1911. His views on race and colonialism are considered unacceptable by students today, but ironically, he became one of the school's most important benefactors, with one third of his royalties being given to RADA every year since his death in 1950. In 2020, for example, royalties from his work contributed £78,000 to the school. It is perhaps an unfortunate coincidence that protests to remove his name coincided with the end of the 70-year copyright term for these royalties in 2020.

The renaming of city features, spurred on by BLM, is also taking place in other countries and being reported in the British press: "Berlin to rename Moor Street after black philosopher Anton Wilhelm Amo" (Connolly). After several years of protests "by postcolonial campaigners, including historians and ethnologists" Berlin authorities announced the renaming of *Mohrenstrasse*, since it was viewed as offensive by many who argued that it referred to black slaves in seventeenth-century Germany, though others considered it "simply an old-fashioned term not meant to be derogatory" (Connolly).

A further result of BLM can be seen in how references to "master" and "slave" in school textbooks are being questioned. The books are not, as might be expected, about colonial history, but on computer science:

> Pearson has recently remediated instances of biased terminology and imagery in courseware based on student feedback. One example is the use of the term "Master/Slave," commonly used in engineering and computer science fields. Pearson is now leading the industry in removing the terminology from hundreds of titles. (Pearson)

Though this change was apparently inspired by student feedback in the USA, it was also reported in the UK, since the publishers cited occupy a prominent place in the British educational market. It was felt that biased terminology such as this required updating, and editorial guidelines were therefore drawn up to fight "systemic racism in education" (Pearson). The terms "master" and "slave" are used to describe a system where one device has control over another, or others, in the context of computer processes, but the

news items sourced did not suggest alternatives to these terms. Some specialised sites suggest using "primary" and "replica", or "primary" and "secondary", which would appear to be an obvious and simple solution to the issue. However, it is important to underline that the focus of the news items referring to the textbook issue was directly related BLM protests around the world, rather than the updating of the terminology of a field of knowledge.

When a news item such as the following appeared, it caused much feedback in favour and against it from multiple sources: "Students want the word 'black' banned from textbooks and lectures" (Simpson). Undergraduates at the University of Manchester maintain that the use of the colour as an adjective is "stemmed in 'colonial history'" and that it is therefore "outdated" in the light of the BLM movement (see Simpson). As examples students cite common phrases such as "black sheep", "blackmail" and "black market" because, they claim, "black" symbolises "negative situations". A cursory look at any dictionary gives us many examples of "black" in compound expressions, but not all of them can be said to invoke negative situations, and much less racial prejudice:

blacklist	blacksmith
black mark	blackboard
blackleg	blackberry
blackout	blackbird
blackhead	black magic

The terms in the right-hand list seem to be merely descriptive of colour. The craftsman (smith) makes objects out of iron, which was formerly called "black metal", and he may indeed end up black after a day's work; students and teachers originally wrote with chalk on boards made of black slate; the fruit and the bird's colour need no justification; black magic may be considered perverse but not by those who choose to practise it, and in fact, if we refer to connotations, a famous brand of dark chocolates, which goes by the name of Black Magic, has enjoyed lasting popularity since it was first marketed in 1933. There are also terms which refer to positive aspects expressed with "black": if a bank account is "in the black", this is much preferred to being "in the red" (with a deficit or overdraft printed in red ink). Black Friday is more than welcome to shoppers looking for bargains; see also a black-belt judoka, black tie (formal evening dress for men), black beans, the new black (trendy,

fashionable), or little black dress (LBD), none of which can be construed as pejorative or racially inspired. The students protesting in the article cited may be going too far, and might do well to carry out a little research into the actual meaning and origins of expressions containing "black" before they try to erase them from textbooks and prohibit their use in lectures. An expert on slang, lexicographer Jonathon Green, dismisses the racial or colonial etymologies of common phrases containing "black", since such meanings were not present "at the moment of coinage" (Simpson). The University of Manchester has promised to address concerns over language that is "divisive and not inclusive", so as to "ensure we embed inclusive linguistics into our values" (StaffNet). Accordingly, the university web page has a section on inclusive language in which it recommends certain usage to refer to race and ethnicity.

7. Conclusions

The title of the present article refers to "discourse awareness", but it could also have referred to "politically correct language" (PC), except that the latter term is often used in a negative sense when users face changes with which they do not agree. Complaints that certain expressions or attitudes are "PC gone mad" are frequently found in the press, especially among readers' letters to the editor. This article has dealt with heightened sensitivity to the effect of our words on others by approaching problematic current social, cultural and historic issues appearing in the media. We have seen how changing social relations and expectations can alter the meaning and interpretation of expressions which were acceptable until now. We have observed that there is growing cultural awareness of the impact of carelessly used words which hurt those they are trying to help (battling cancer) or which exclude others (fat-shaming); some can provoke differing interpretations (hit her) or completely confuse job candidates (corporatese). We have seen how gendered language can impede equality in the labour market, and that when it is modified, job opportunities flourish. Sociolinguistic change has been perceived in the vocabulary associated with the natural world. Perhaps the biggest surge in linguistic cultural awareness has been inspired by the BLM movement, causing society to relate colonialism and ethnicity with hitherto

revered figures and names. In spite of some controversial interpretations of what is acceptable or unacceptable according to modern thought, we can conclude that there is greater cultural awareness of the impact of language in the media, accompanied by the necessary debate on inclusivity in an increasingly sensitive multicultural environment.

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Transmale Models: A Discursive Analysis on Porn Ads

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In recent years, the debate on transgender experiences has gained ground, both in academia (see Almeida; Preciado; Edelman & Zimman; Edelman) and in mainstream media. This debate is inspired both by literary characters (see Nery; Moira), actors, recent cases in point are those of the trans woman actress Maria Clara Spinelli, who is a member of the Rede Globo cast, theatre actress Renata Carvalho, and trans actor Léo Moreira Sá, musicians such as Bahias and Cozinha Mineira, Liniker and Linn da Quebrada, as well as by the number of murders being recorded in Brazil - between January and August 2018, 96 transpeople were murdered, according to data from RedeTrans. The visibility of these bodies has become a social, economic, and cultural phenomenon, with a strong impact on consumer society, particularly on the porn industry, eager for news for its thousands of users. The growing interest in androgynous bodies that endorse different sexualities (whether hetero-, homo-, bi-, and asexual-) is fuelled by their distinctiveness, since they are viewed as appetizers for the market of desires. This is particularly true of trans men, who can be perceived as objects of fetish in the neoliberal world.

Despite prolific research on the topic, few studies in the field of applied linguistics (see Borba 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2016) have addressed the discursive constructions of trans bodies. Understanding this phenomenon involves perceiving how transgender male bodies have been represented discursively and expanding our ability to understand the relationship between discourse and contemporary society, since, while such bodies are met with rejection in various contexts, they can play a central role in the industry of desires by fostering the commercialisation of a specific social group.

This research study converges with interdisciplinary applied linguistics (see Moita-Lopes; Fabrício; Souza & Zolin-Vesz) in that it relies on a transdisciplinary theoretical framework and moves away from the mere application of linguistics. In accordance with the interdisciplinary approach, supporting theories are criss-crossed by human and social sciences, with a view to promoting understanding of social problems and their relationship with language and discourse (see Moita-Lopes; Zolin-Vesz). In the case of this study, pornography websites that feature trans models come forth as a relevant social arena for contemporary language research, since, by producing discourses about bodies and genders, they demonstrate how society is organised. The interdisciplinary perspective should not, however, be associated simply with the choice of the analytical object, but as a result of an epistemology that perceives the world as mutable and in transition. Language is not considered neutral, to the extent that it always involves ideological and political choices. Likewise, different meanings can only be understood within their locus of enunciation. Therefore, this study does not focus on the use of language and its lexical-grammatical structural elements, but on the production of utterances that help to convey certain meanings at a given sociodiscursive interaction (see Foucault).

Therefore, this article seeks to analyse trans men's discourse construction processes in adverts on pornography website *Câmera Privê* in the Brazilian context. The choice of this website as a research environment stems from the fact that it allows these bodies to negotiate their *appearance* (see Butler 2018). Even though it is now possible to maintain resistance and to experience gender transgression and transcendence in different spaces, only a few foster pleasure and affection between trans and non-trans individuals. In Brazil, a number of websites and social network groups provide information to the trans community and, in so doing, bring people closer together.

It should be stressed that relationships and gender performativities generated in the virtual environment under analysis only take place because of the nature of this particular setting. Possibilities of resistance and expressions of otherness emerge in-between the lines of algorithms and binary codes. In this sense, the internet functions both as a security tool for models and as a showcase which offers new possibilities to consumers. The digital environment also plays a major role in contemporary practices of seeking sexual and/or intimate partners. Therefore, the data shown in this article can only be

understood if one views the virtual space with its own social and cultural specificities and acknowledges that the ensuing relationships are completely different from those mediated by face-to-face interactions.

This study's analytical process does not aim to create generalisations, but to highlight the simultaneous performative effects and semiotic resources that produce meanings within the chosen context. According to Borba (214a, 24 – our translation), this theoretical-methodological approach acknowledges that

> semiotic resources made available by specific discourses are in the world, a constitutive part of social life; hence, to use a given sign is to engage in social action that locally produces and translocally reproduces historical, cultural, political, social and identity relationships.

The analysis focuses on the relationship between discourse and sexuality conveyed in the website adverts in order to answer the following question: how is the discursive construction of male performances represented in adverts of transgender male models on a pornography website? Achieving this involved research on discourse-related analytical and methodological parameters as well as theoretical principles on performativity. In short, this study seeks to reflect on the importance of research on gender and sexuality in online settings, as well as its political, cultural, and social effects on language research.

1. Language, Speech, Performance and Queer Theories

The relationship between language, discourse and queer theories is grounded on Foucault's work within post-structuralism, which seeks to challenge the preservation of binary hierarchical processes and forms of exclusion. Human sexuality and gender identities are, thus, understood as sociohistorical constructions shaped by discourse. Despite subscribing to the concept of discourse proposed by Fairclough (2001), this study does not engage with the analytical criteria of critical discourse analysis. Discourse is here used simply to help clarify the collected data - discourse is to be viewed as a set of social practices (of linguistic, educational, or political nature, among others) that produces meanings about what is being uttered. Therefore, the categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality only make sense because of social experiences that legitimise appropriate behaviour.

Queer theories (in the plural, as proposed by Borba (2014c), grounded on nonuniversality, reflect on social and cultural devices that help to maintain gender intelligibility (see Butler 2010), which dictates what is normal and natural for people's subjectivities. Following this reasoning, the feminine is to be regarded as fragile, emotional, and vaginal, whereas the masculine is synonymous with penis, logic and aggressiveness. At this particular time in history, the gender intelligibility matrix is constantly called upon as a political currency for the silencing of subjectivities, such as that of transgender people or, conversely, for their objectification as sexual fetish.

It cannot be stressed enough that all discourse around gender intelligibility takes place through a sophisticated dyadic system (cisgender men/trans men, white/black, beautiful/ugly, good/bad) which privileges one group over another. However, one element of the pair does not present itself without the other because its own illocutionary existence occurs through this language game. For instance, stating that someone is ugly involves assigning meanings to beauty that function as parameters for this utterance. What current research proposes is the displacement of this logic, traditionally regarded as the only one possible, with a view to showing that there are many others in various combinations.

In terms of language, Butler (2010) draws attention to the fact that gender is not an inherent individual quality which materialises in actions; rather, it functions according to identity performance models, following which actions are constantly reproduced and updated discursively in historical and culturally specific contexts. However, Borba (2014c) warns that viewing the subject and the body as discursive effects has led to misperceptions regarding the relationship between performance and performativity, as if gender identity could be modified as one changes clothes, hence denying the materiality of the body and its symbolic and physical violence. To understand gender as a performance is to consider it within a discursive context that constrains and limits those involved in rigid forms of behaviour, almost always aligned with a hegemonic heterosexuality that limits the possibilities for action, stiffening bodies and conforming them to linguistic, medico-legal, and psychosocial parameters.

One of the most didactic examples of gender studies is the birth of a child, when the uttered phrase "It's a girl" is performative, not verifiable. When uttering it, what one does is not describe what is being observed based on

discursive-anatomical parameters of medico-legal discourse; in fact, discourse creates just as it promises to describe. When the phrase "It's a girl" is uttered, a series of other associations are made and the newly-born body is assigned a social role and its consequences.

Following this brief overview of the theoretical framework selected for this study, this article now focuses on the performative discourse verified in adverts of transgender male models and trans men on the *Câmera Privê* website. Such discourse concomitantly describes and creates potentially desirable bodies, bearing in mind that the "body" is itself a construction, as are the many "bodies" that make up the domain of subjects with gender marks (Butler 2010, 27).

2. Methodology, Context and Analytical Procedures

The *Câmera Privê* website, first designed and registered in São Paulo in 2013, consists of a webcam network and is described as "live webcam sex". The home page (available at: https://cameraprive.com/br/transguys [accessed: 24 May 2019]) presents four sections: live girls, live transsexuals, live boys, and live trans boys (the latter having been introduced in 2018). There are five language options (Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French and English); to register on the site, users must fill out a form with personal details (name, identification number, address, telephone number and e-mail address). There are two login options, "user" and "model". To access the chat section, however, users are required to buy credits using credit cards, debit cards or electronic tickets and, for this, the website is equipped with security systems that ensure complete data confidentiality. The home page redirects users to another page containing detailed information about the website. Credit amounts cost from R$ 9.99 (for 10 credits) to R$ 299.99 (for 300 credits) and can be used for chatting or buying videos, photos, and photo albums from models' profiles. The chat section offers two options: simple chat, at a cost of R$ 1.35 per minute, or private/exclusive chat, at a cost of R$ 2.40 per minute. This information was collected during data collection, which took place between August and September 2018. It is up to each model to define what will be displayed in each of the categories, but, in

general, the most important chats are reserved for private mode. After chat sessions, users may rate the models and the so-called "shows".

For this study, 76 profiles from the website's trans boys section were analysed to shed light on the construction of male performances in that particular environment. Factors taken into account included ethnicity, evidence (or lack) of hormonal therapy (e.g. hair and beard), evidence of prior surgery, and indication (or lack) of binary gender. The five profiles with the highest number of likes were selected so as to verify the discourses conveyed and validated through these interactive tools. Interviews were also conducted with two of the five models through simple chat sessions, with the purpose of understanding their performance.

During these sessions, it was initially explained to them that the researcher is also a trans man, that the data generated would be used in a research article and that their identity and integrity would be protected. The models agreed to participate in the research and signed an informed consent form. They were asked the following questions: what is work like? Do you like it or not? Do you consider it profitable? What is most recurring in clients' requests? Do you wish to make any further comments?

After registration, users are given access to a private area and may choose one of four categories indicated (in this case, trans boys). Then, users are redirected to a page which displays the models' profiles, their names and photos included. The section on trans boys has 76 models with the following characteristics: 74 males and 2 non-binaries; as for skin colour, 16 are black, 10 are dark-skinned, and 50 are white; 58 take hormones and 2 do not; 18 underwent surgery and 24 did not; 8 are overweight; 1 is gay, 2 are bisexual and 1 is pansexual.

In short, most of the models are white, take hormones and show hegemonic male features (muscles, beard and body hair). It was not possible to identify how many underwent chest masculinisation surgery - chest masculinisation surgery consists of removing breasts and reconstructing nipples and pectorals following the anatomical patterns associated with male bodies. Since 2013, it has been one of the stages of the transsexual process which is part of the treatment of trans men within Brazil's National Health Service (SUS) - given the fact that several of the photos did not reveal this part of their bodies (usually covered with a shirt or photographed from the back). While

this suggests that top surgery may not have been performed in this particular group, there were a considerable number of profiles which exhibited evidence (or lack) of surgical interventions. Given the significant amount of data, only the five models with the most likes on the website were included in the study.

3. Bodily Speech: the Performance of Erotic Video Adverts on the *Câmera Privê* Website

According to Shalom (186), an advert is a type of text which dates back to eighteenth-century England and aims to promote a certain object. Therefore, since its origins, this text genre has a commercial function, which is crucial to understand how advertising has been reinterpreted by the contemporary search for sexual partners. This search does not only involve looking for people, but also for the commodification of individuals. According to Fairclough (1992), this cannot be understood in a strictly economic sense, but as a process through which social domains have organised products and distributed the consumption of goods – in this case, of trans bodies.

In this study, the adverts analysed create a communication link that seeks to attract *Câmera Privê* users through physical (weight, height youth) and intellectual ("intelligent" and "conscious") attributes, sexual orientation ("pansexual"), educational training ("university level"), interpersonal characteristics ("sympathy" and "humour") and erotic skills and characteristics ("aroused", "clitoris", "chest", "vagina", "horny"). In textual terms, the adverts aim to be direct and economical in their language choices, emphasising vocatives ("hi, how are you?"), motion verbs ("showing", "going"), mental verbs ("liking", "worshipping"), modals that convey no limits for users' desire ("you can enhance pleasure"), deictics that place interlocutors in the space-time context of utterances ("here", "where") and adjectives that qualify the experience as pleasurable ("great desires", "beautiful moments") - all words and sentences extracted from the data have been translated from Portuguese into English. All of these linguistic strategies have the sole function of promoting the product to attest its quality and persuading the customer to buy it, always mediated by secrecy. They are similar to those of other adverts (such as car adverts), which focus on customer satisfaction when buying a product.

As shown in the previous section, the majority of *Câmera Privê* models are white trans men, with different sexual orientations and more or less hegemonic male performance practices. It is not the objective of this study, however, to frame models within essentialist categories, since they are heterogeneous while showing common features that make it possible to systematise the discursive construction of their utterances. This diversity is demonstrated in the examples that follow. To preserve the anonymity of participants, letters are here used instead of names. Excerpts are also presented without any changes to their linguistic content.

Excerpt 1

A

> 1.73 m tall, 72 kg. I want to show you what I am, to show you that there are many other possibilities for pleasure. Show you the new, perhaps unknown, show you what is good, a man with a pussy: here we can have a conversation at will, but I'm not naked!
>
> PRIVATE CHAT: I fulfil all your wishes and show you everything you want! This is where our imagination has no limits and pleasure is what moves us, so let's discover ourselves and enjoy great wishes and beautiful moments, come.

In Excerpt 1, A presents himself as a desirable and symmetrical trans male body ("1.73 m tall, 72 kg"); in other words, a lean and tall body, within the performance standards of male beauty. In the construction of his character, there is a linguistic device often used in the profiles of trans men: the interchange between "me" and "us". The pronoun "I" appears constantly when the model evokes his attributes, while "we" seems to emphasise the user's - the words "user", "customer" and "consumer" are used as synonyms in this article, since they represent the interactions observed in the data - possible advantages within this sexual relationship. This description also demonstrates that the model seeks to sell himself as new and exotic ("a man with a pussy"), as a unique product capable of offering the customer unlimited pleasure. Therefore, a product that deserves to be better paid with the consumer's access to the room. A similar trait can be seen in the profile of model B, in spite of its distinctive utterances.

Excerpt 2

B

> Not married. Bisexual. I do fetish. Six-centimetre clitoris. Little toys. Come and have fun without fear. Curiosity is a friend of pleasure. Welcome and please do not forget to evaluate at the end of the show. SIMPLE CHAT: Open your mind before asking me to open my legs!
>
> PRIVATE CHAT: Between webcams anything goes.

Emphasis is placed on the model's attributes and the possibility of becoming an object of entertainment for the user, as well as on an air of exotification ("showing you the new, the unknown", "Curiosity is a friend of pleasure"). This appeal seems to be quite functional, since it is one of the most visited profiles. Therefore, it offers a very efficient performance in attempting to sell a highly desirable product. In the pleasure game that is established between the model and his potential interlocutors, a discourse that stresses heterosexuality as a norm is also constructed. The focus on the status of play may signal that there is no gender destabilisation between participants, since it is likely that the user still perceives himself as a cisgender man who penetrates a "pussy", therefore being immune to any challenges to his identity. The opposite is also valid, in that homosexual men may become curious about having intercourse with vaginas without giving up their identity. Thus, the ensuing discourse may stretch the understanding of expressions of identity while consolidating other lingering patterns, such as the exotification of trans identities and the objectification of their bodies.

B's profile seems to confirm Butler's (2010) perception of the discursive construction of the body as not displaced from a heteronormative matrix. The model would certainly not be so successful if he did not present himself as "a man with a pussy", capable of amplifying the pleasures of cisgender men. Another relevant aspect in the discursive construction of models' profiles is the clarity of their speech. They are aware that they are on a pornography website whose objective is to expand users' notions of pleasure and satisfaction; therefore, the mystery and the possibility of new experiences must be constantly renewed, as shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 3

C

> […] hey, very happy, my name is C, rsrsrs, talking about pleasure, I'm here for that [...] I love showing, talking and bitching [...] let's meet via chat, it's better...
>
> SIMPLE CHAT: Let's go and I'll show you lol.
>
> PRIVATE CHAT: Come and show me what I do in private lol.

In Excerpt 3, C offers a different performance to that of the other profiles analysed, since his strategy of styling himself is built on a more informal, mischievous tone, establishing a greater sense of intimacy with his client and offering iconic representations of laughter and mock greetings. These resources are complemented by constant allusion to the sexual nature of their actions through invitations ("let's go").

In fact, the idea of space and displacement implied by the model's utterances is quite significant. The client is repeatedly invited to the private area, which is economically advantageous for both. For the model, it is the guarantee of receiving greater added value, while for the customer it is the possibility of quenching his desire. Another aspect that needs to be highlighted is the impersonal nature of the relationship in this pleasure game, one which does not involve risks for the partners – the customer is the one who can do everything and from whom nothing is asked, while the model has his physical integrity preserved. It is common knowledge that trans people have little space in the formal job market, often having to resort to this kind of job opportunity.

The following excerpt shows greater tension and rupture in gender patterns as other performativities are posed, such as those of the sapiosexual (a person sexually stimulated by intelligent people) and of the nonbinary (a person who does not identify with either of the binary genres).

Excerpt 4

D

> Trans man, nonbinary! 27 years old, 70 kg and 1.80 cm tall. I like to talk, a good chat makes me very comfortable. I'm sapiosexual, a geek and a nerd. Passionate about cinema, movies, TV series, rock, pop, electronics and a fan of

> the Marvel and DC universes. I have surfed since childhood and I love playing video games and online games. I'm fascinated by travel, new cultures and languages, I'm a polyglot, I love exploring difference. I like educated people, so if you have an education we will get along very well. Come and get to know me better, I can show you how naughty a nerd can be... I like fetish, BDSM, voyeurism and short stories. I'm effeminate, I like to wear panties and that doesn't make me any less of a man. *I'm not a call boy.*
>
> SIMPLE CHAT: Here we can talk, you can tell me your fetishes and desires, I can also tell you more about myself, show you my tits, my panties, but I'm not naked and I don't pass on personal information either (WhatsApp and Facebook).
>
> PRIVATE CHAT: In private, the conversation heats up, I can fulfil your desires, fetishes and desires. I like it when someone makes me very excited, you can turn on your webcam and speak by audio, even better if you tell me what you would like to do with me, I get crazy with lust and very wet. I have some toys, vibrators, dildos and some surprises lol. Come and enjoy, enjoy the moment that this nerd will surely make you horny.

D describes himself as different from the other models who appear on the website, as someone who, in addition to offering sex, is well educated and has broad cultural knowledge of music, literature, languages and travel – in short, a differentiated product. In his description, D tries to avoid labels related to prostitution; for this reason, perhaps his profile is one of the most detailed on the website, including characteristics that differ from what users would expect from a trans person on a pornography website. In addition to his intellectual skills, the model outlines athletic ones, like surfing, which explains why his body is desirable and relatable to ideal standards of masculinity and femininity.

In his profile, clients are referred to only twice: "we can talk", "we will get along very well". Furthermore, there is a structured interaction between "I" (model) and "you" (user) which resembles a conversation: "Here we can talk, you can tell me your fetishes and desires", "the conversation heats up". This recurring element differs from other profiles, perhaps because the model presents himself as more intellectually sophisticated than others. D is not just a model that satisfies users in an asymmetric relationship between customer and an objectified being, since he also describes his personal preferences: "I like it when someone makes me very excited", "I get crazy with lust and very wet".

Another aspect that differentiates him is effeminacy, which does not fit into the fixed standards of masculinity and femininity: "I'm effeminate, I like to wear panties and that doesn't make me any less of a man". As stated earlier, the research subjects are heterogeneous and unique. The next excerpt helps to shed further light on models' discursive construction.

Excerpt 5

E

> Trans male, not binary and pansexual. University student. I like people regardless of gender and sex. I am a boy with a female body, I did not undergo any surgery. I have breasts and a vagina, and that doesn't make me any less of a man. My body is what I am, it has a lot of power. The penis is not the representation of man, genitals are not people. I breach [TRANSgrido] binary social norms. TRANSbordo fights against heteronormativity. And I can TRANScend your pleasure.

As shown in excerpt 4, E's semiotic construction reveals a person who presents himself as well educated and aware of contemporary discussions on transgender. This fact, among others, can enhance self-commodification. Therefore, E offers not only sexual but also intellectual pleasure, approaching a social imaginary that proclaims intellectuality as a male feature. He states early on that he is a university student, which suggests that, in his view, university education adds value to his profile. This theoretical accumulation is also perceived in the statement "[t]he penis is not the representation of man, genitals are not people", as well as in the reference to heteronormativity, which indicates that he feels comfortable in using these concepts.

The tone adopted in the profile resembles a manifesto, and the use of capital letters for the prefix trans- in "TRANSgrido", "TRANSbordo" and "TRANScend" shows E is proud to be a trans person and/or participates in activist groups. The statement "and that doesn't make me less of a man", found in excerpts 4 and 5, suggests that the models are aware of how gender games work and are willing to break these norms and negotiate their male performances. There is a difference in excerpt 5, in the sense that there is no direct conversation between the model and the website user; even so, there seems to be an agreement that assigns the model with the active role in the relationship: "I can TRANScend your pleasure". A superficial analysis might focus on the

apparent contradiction in D's profile, which uses male and nonbinary terms to define gender identity; however, this effect is only possible due to the rigidity with which performativities of masculinity and femininity are viewed. Defining oneself as a nonbinary man can be understood, in this sense, as a counter-hegemonic performativity of masculinity.

The data analysis shows that the central focus of profiles lies in models' genitals, both in terms of size and of their ability to ejaculate and produce fluid when aroused. Thus, the process of styling oneself (Bonfante, 2016) in these adverts appears in line with research by Edelman and Zimman (2014), which focuses on the statements conveyed by videos posted by trans men and transmasculine people on the Xtube® pornography website. The authors investigate the ways video contents are presented and how the focus on the genitalia of trans men and transmasculine people can be understood as performative from the moment they create, or recreate, what they appear to describe: "Our investigation of the language of genital embodiment situates trans lived experience in the somatic and sensual body as well as in the political-economic conditions of its production" (Edelman and Zimman, 2014, 677).

In this scenario, words like "boycunt" ("boy's pussy") and "bonus hole" ("extra hole"), present in many of the adverts analysed, are used by Edelman and Zimman to demonstrate that bodies construct discourse as much as the opposite, moulding others and creating new existential possibilities. The performative character of the *Câmera Privê* profiles becomes clear as associations previously seen as impossible within the grammar of binary, heterosexual and cisgender sexes and genders ("boy's pussy") are now not only possible, but desirable. From this perspective, language's recurrent processes enable these transgressing bodies to negotiate their desirability through lexical items culturally associated with male performances of self-stylisation and self-eroticisation. The data shows that the (performative) act of describing bodies which are legally and anatomically regarded as female using expressions like "man with a pussy" promotes a rupture of cis-heteronormative language flows. Repeating and overlapping these antagonistic words is necessary to describe trans men's bodies; while assigning these bodies with a range of possibilities, such linguistic adaptations shape discourses and these, in turn, create and intersect bodies. Therefore, it is necessary to understand intersectionality and relationality as inherent to human action.

The trans bodies under analysis not only question the fallacious rigidity and straightness of sex–gender–desire, but also offer an alternative praxis,

performed in Butlerian terms, that can prove useful for thinking about other contemporary social and political issues. By (literally) exposing themselves, these individuals exercise their right to be seen, in such a way as to generate financial profit. In this regard, virtual space must be viewed as fundamentally relevant, given that it allows exposure (with little vulnerability) of bodily appearance (see Butler 2018); outside it, models would feel much more vulnerable and subject to violence. This, however, does not take away the profile's performative character, exercised with each "like", each praise, each positive evaluation; perhaps without knowing it, users who evaluate models' performances are validating, in a way, the discourses conveyed on the website. As in other loci, there is a multiplicity of converging and diverging discourses that both reinforce definitions of hegemonic masculinities and, when faced with other possible performances, may acquire more flexible boundaries. One cannot fail to observe the structural remains as well as the ruptures. It is by observing what remains that the secular structures that have long imprisoned bodies can be viewed more clearly. These structures are the most difficult to overcome and the most important.

The data analysis showed a predominance of white, muscular, homonormative bodies, who can afford a good computer (with an in-built camera) and internet access, as well as a bank account (which is not so easy for a trans person in Brazil because social names – or civil registry amendments – are still not widely accepted). More than the hermeneutics of bodies, it is operational logic that plays a central role. According to the research participants, users often ask to see models' vaginas during sessions: "what they ask for the most is to see the genital organ, what a vagina looks like in me"; "Their business is to see a man with a pussy, literally". This demonstrates what Edelman and Zimman (680) understand as self-determination.

> To situate trans men as "female-bodied men" suggests that gender is open for self-identification, whereas "sex" constitutes an immutable category that is fundamentally different from gender. Yet even trans men who forego genital surgery – or anybody modification at all – may claim the descriptor male-bodied for themselves (Zimman, 2014). In doing so, they make a rather bold claim, suggesting that sex is, in fact, open to self-determination such that a "male body" can be defined as the body of a (self-identified) man.

During the data collection stage, this effect occurred at different times, whether in the exaltation of the size of the clitoris in relation to the cisgender penis ("6 cm of clitoris") or the praise of hegemonic masculinity when using a male

lexicon while deconstructing the male/penis relation ("the male with the pussy you are looking for"). Another form of destabilisation is the act of moving smoothly between genders, thus showing their spectral character, as in excerpts 4 ("I am effeminate, I like to wear panties and that doesn't make me less of a man") and 5 ("I am a boy with a female body, I did not undergo surgery. I have breasts and a vagina, and that doesn't make me less of a man"). Both examples confirm that the fact that models do not exercise a gender ideal with their bodies does not neutralise their masculinity. These examples reveal a tendency towards negotiations referred to earlier, since both D and E, who identify themselves as nonbinary, negotiate their masculinity in order to allow and incorporate socially distant elements of male gender.

Although this study focuses on discursive construction by the models analysed, a direct link with the neoliberal logic that commercialises bodies, fluids and pleasures came up during the interviews. The linguistic strategies used on the website enable the negotiation of non-hegemonic (but not counter-hegemonic) male performances, while at the same time establishing a close dialogue with contemporary capitalist agenda. The interviewees reflected on the commercialisation of bodies and fluids in the pornography market. When asked whether they liked the job, one of the models replied, "I don't like it, I do it for the money", whereas another stated, "The work is pleasant, fun, more or less profitable because it is a new category, curious to know how we are; it's good for me; I like to talk and show myself".

The question, however, is not whether one likes it or not, but how the logic of this stylisation of the self operates in society and how these bodies interact with their own structures, as argued by Preciado (247):

> The sexual body is the product of a sexual division of flesh according to which each organ is defined by its function. A sexuality always implies a precise governing of the mouth, hand, anus, vagina. Until recently, the relationship between buying/selling and dependence that united the capitalism to the workers also governed the relationship between genders, which was conceived as a relationship between the ejaculator and their facilitator of ejaculation. Femininity, far from being nature, is the quality of the orgasmic force when it can be converted into merchandise, into an object of economic exchange, into work.

Perhaps a more coherent interpretation would be that the generified body can be, and indeed is, converted into a workforce. Bodies framed within the scope of femininities have been assigned these functions by sexist regimes; however, in contemporary times, other bodies also exercise the function of

facilitating ejaculation. These men and their performances are converted into merchandise, their pleasure into work and their fluids into money.

4. By Way of Conclusion

This article aimed to show how the discursive construction of adverts by transgender male models takes place on a pornography website. The scope of this study is justified, given the greater visibility of these bodies, particularly in the media. At the same time, it is clear that transgender people are still seen as abject beings that destabilise the standards of a heteronormative society. Thus, there is still little social space for the employability of trans men in the face of transphobia. Pornography websites, in turn, have become spaces that legitimise these bodies, seen as exotic and quite profitable in an industry eager for novelty. Investigating such a setting is, therefore, relevant and requires a theoretical and methodological framework derived from queer theories. It has become evident that, regardless of what common sense states, trans models, like any human group, are heterogeneous, with performativities that may bring them closer to or farther away from gender regulatory mechanisms. Nevertheless, the analyses shed light on models' performative role in their website profiles. The masculinity negotiation processes evidenced in the discourses seem to endorse trends from both social movements and the streets. Other performance possibilities are now beginning to unfold amid the rigidity of Western hegemonic gender norms.

As regards the performative nature of gender expressions, it was possible to verify, based on research by Butler (2010; 2018), that gender identities and their corporations are performative in that they deal with daily social constructions of symbols that, printed on bodies, amount to belonging to a given binary gender. In this sense, the self-styling processes shown by transgender, transvestite and cisgender women, or even by cisgender or transgender men in drag, do not differ much amongst themselves. This gender division, according to the Butlerian perspective, continues to be performative, i.e. it reproduces and co-creates bodily performances that, associated with contextual values, reiterate its validity.

The gender performances observed in the virtual setting function dialectically, sometimes tensioning, sometimes reaffirming stereotypes traditionally associated with hegemonic masculinities, thus creating new bodily

and discursive possibilities understood within the scope of masculinities. This does not necessarily imply a large and noticeable structural change, nor does it mean an improvement in the lives of transmasculine people and trans men. However, one can be fairly optimistic that historical processes develop from discursive changes, which also take place in daily life. Even though people inhabit several temporalities simultaneously, there are occasional signs of social advancement and resistance, at least with regard to transgender: a case in point is Brazil's Provision no. 73 (passed on 28 June 2018), which allows people to change gender by self-declaration. It is important to understand that the negotiations observed on the website take place within a discourse of commodification of bodies that depicts them as mere objects to be bought and sold. Perhaps it is one of the reasons why trans people have received so much attention from the neoliberal market, eager for new developments that may turn into profitable merchandise. In terms of language, studies like this can help shed light on the ways discourse produces and makes new male performances visible in the virtual environment (in the case of trans men) and how such performances take shape. The virtual environment has also become crucial in shedding light on contemporary intimate/sexual relations. The use of applications and websites to search for partners has become increasingly common. Therefore, knowing the social and discursive rules that emerge from the virtual space is key to interacting in it, which inexorably affects our face-to-face relationships.

Finally, this study may give rise to others with a view to expanding the scope of applied linguistics and gender studies and, ultimately, an understanding of social relations through language.

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Critical Language Teacher Education: Postmemory as Resistance

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1. Introduction

This paper[1] aims at discussing recent critical issues in language teacher education that have influenced literacy and research perspectives in Brazil. We will focus specifically on the influence of historical events on language teacher development based on the concept of postmemory, which, according to Marianne Hirsch (1997), "characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, [...] shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated" (22).

Hirsch, as it is widely known, discusses memory and postmemory in relation to the Holocaust. In Brazil, the Military Coup of 1964, which set off more than 20 years of dictatorship, still impacts on all areas of our lives, including education and language teaching. We believe that resorting to memory to help confront and problematise historical events may create space for a type of education, including language teacher education, which tries to avoid the errors of the past and aims at constructing better social futures.

Using a qualitative design for data generation and analysis, we report on a study of in-service language teachers working in different contexts, who were enrolled in a graduate course in Applied Linguistics at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, a big federal university in Brazil. Data were generated using written narratives of participants' experiences. Based on the results, we look at the potential of postmemory to promote critical awareness of turbulent

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discourses, making use of the social, cultural, and historical influences on teacher education in Brazil and problematising the relationship between life stories, memory, and postmemory as tools for resistance and critical education.

2. Memory in Applied Linguistics and Teacher Education

According to Alastair Pennycook, the area of Applied Linguistics is by nature inter/transdisciplinary. The author, one of the most prominent scholars in Applied Linguistics research all over the world, contends that the area is considered as *moving praxis* and its investigations are always changing. More recently, Claire Kramsch states that Applied Linguistics focuses on the study of language(s) and the "intricate relationship among language, discourse, knowledge and power" (215). We stemmed from these intricacies in Applied Linguistics to design a project focusing on memory and postmemory, but also involving history, education and language teacher education, more specifically.

As part of the area of Applied Linguistics, language teacher education has changed throughout time according to several so-called "turns", i.e., there has been a "communicative turn" in language teaching during the 1980s, a "reflective turn" in research in teacher education during the 1990s and a "critical turn" in both research and teaching in the beginning of the 2000s. These so-called "turns" are metaphorical representations of the main interests of the area, but a previous turn does not necessarily disappear with the breakout of the next. On the contrary, they go on together, influencing Applied Linguistics in several ways at the same time. In this scenario, there has also been an "affective turn" in Applied Linguistics, involving both language learning (view of the learner) and language teaching (view of the teacher).

This study aims at putting together the affective turn and the critical turn. What is considered "affective" in research and practice in Applied Linguistics are issues involving, for example, learners' and teachers' beliefs (see Kalaja et al.) and/or attitudes (see Woods), teachers' subjective knowledge of their profession (Freeman 1996), and learners' and teachers' memories of learning and/or teaching (see Caetano and Mattos), as well as their experiences and life histories (see Coracini). In terms of what is considered critical in Applied

Linguistics, Allan Luke states that "what has counted as the critical in recent years has focused on how people use texts and discourses to construct and negotiate identity, power, and capital" (21). Critical Applied Linguistics, thus, as we have seen, focuses especially on issues of power intertwined with language, discourses, and identity. All these elements are crucial to the focus of this study.

According to Everaldo Araújo and colleagues, "few things are so particularly affective as an individual's, a people's or a group's memory. Thus, memory and language are part, so to speak, of an immeasurable intangible good"[2] (8). In this sense, it is possible to understand why memory has become a central concept in Applied Linguistics.

Thus, this paper focuses on the memories and postmemories that in-service teachers might have of the Dictatorship in Brazil and, at the same time, tries to create in the participants a sense of resistance so that the horrors of the dictatorship period should never happen again.

3. Memory, Postmemory and Identity

Maurice Halbwachs, in *The Collective Memory*, talks at length about the formation of individual and social memories of the human being. For the author, each individual carries a personal memory of their own experiences, and a social memory, built collectively by the simple fact that we live in society. In other words, an internal or autobiographical memory and an external or historical memory.

It is, then, by being part of a social group that we form our collective memories. Part of this collective or social memory is the legacy of the group's customs and traditions. The collective memory of a group, containing its legacies and traditions, is passed on from generation to generation through contact with the elders, through stories and narratives of the family and other people belonging to the group, in addition to the crucial role of the school, which systematises the group's narratives in the form of historical

[2] Our translation from the original: "Poucas coisas são tão particularmente afetivas quanto as memórias de um indivíduo, de um povo ou de um grupo. Dessa forma, memória e língua fazem parte, por assim dizer, de um bem imaterial imensurável".

knowledge. It is at school that children learn and acquire the historical knowledge of the world around them, the neighbourhood, the city, the country, and the planet. In addition, Halbwachs also reminds us that "the child is also in contact with his grandparents, and through them goes back to an even more remote past"[3] (84).

We can say that this "even more remote past", passed on to children by their grandparents and previous generations, is related to what Hirsch has termed postmemory. According to her, "postmemory describes the relationship of the second generation with powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their birth but were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (103). Postmemory, therefore, is indirectly formed by traumatic events, which happened in the past, but still produce effects in the present. Andréa Mattos and Érika Caetano (2018) explain that

> the term (...) is currently being used in various disciplines in order to understand the influences of memory on our identity and how it may shape our life and our ways of seeing and being in the world, as well as how we position and articulate ourselves or make sense of our place and role in society" (247).

One of the possible effects produced by traumatic events and the stories we hear about them is our personal and professional identities, which start being formed at a very early age. Chimamanda Aditchie reminds us of "how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children" (n. pag.). Listening to cultural and familial stories of the past, we grow up learning these stories and form our identities while we are formed by them.

Maria José Coracini understands identity as formed by interdiscourses, which are, in fact, "fragments of multiple discourses that constitute the discursive memory"[4] (9) of the human being, received as an inheritance and continually modified and transformed precisely in our relations with the other, in an imbricated network of interrelations, at the same time constituted and constitutive of our values, beliefs, ideologies and cultures. According to the author, these interdiscourses, or discursive memory, constitute

[3] Our translation from the version in Portuguese by Beatriz Sidou: "a criança também está em contato com seus avós, e através deles remonta a um passado ainda mais remoto".

[4] Our translation from the original: "fragmentos de múltiplos discursos que constituem a memória discursiva".

innumerable voices that form our vision of the world, and dialectically are also formed by it. Memory and postmemory, thus, seem to be interconnected by our life experiences and our relationships with the other. According to Juan Almeida, "memory is situated in a true conflict between remembering and forgetting"[5] (10).

4. Postmemory and Critical Language Teacher Education

Critical Language Teacher Education is a relatively new term that is now being used to describe critical approaches to pre-service and/or in-service language teacher development, in contrast to more traditional views. If we foster a critical perspective in language teaching, teachers must be prepared to use critical views in their classrooms (see Ferraz; Mattos; Monte Mór 2015). Daniel Ferraz explains that a type of education that is "solely mechanistic and neoliberal no longer holds the transformations we are experiencing"[6] (89). He claims, thus, that what we now need is a type of education that focuses on political awareness, criticality, and citizenship.

We resorted to Walkyria Monte-Mór, who, when discussing teachers' agency, asks: "Is it possible that the explanation for the unsatisfactory educational outcome for critical citizenship and agency in Brazil—depicted by academic research—lies in the history of the identity construction of the Brazilian teacher and citizen?" (127). To try to answer this question, the author states that three major historical influences on Brazilian education have already been identified: "the Jesuit missionary perspectives; the colonialism that arrived along with the Jesuits and others that came later and stayed longer; and the authoritarian views experienced during the dictatorship (1964–1985)" (127). In summary, the author makes a joke that "the Brazilian teachers' souls are inhabited by a Jesuit, a colonizer, and an authoritarian" (127) and that is why these three influences may have impacted the construction of the identity of Brazilian teachers.

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[5] Our translation from the original: "a memória está situada em um verdadeiro conflito entre o lembrar e o esquecer".

[6] Our translation from the original: "exclusivamente mecanicista/neoliberal já não comporta mais as transformações as quais estamos vivendo".

According to Monte-Mór, these influences still inhabit the identities of Brazilian teachers: the Jesuit teacher, who, in this case, would be the one "enlightened" by the knowledge he has and, consequently, responsible for transmitting that knowledge, providing light to his students; the colonising teacher, would be the one responsible for bringing an absolute truth into the classroom, a truth that students must learn without contesting; finally, the authoritarian teacher would be a dominant one, a dictator, who dominates his students and, if necessary, even tortures them, as occurred during the Brazilian military period.

Henry Giroux argues that education should take the role of critical practice, or "praxis" as proposed by Paulo Freire in relation to pedagogy. In this way, it would be able to

> [p]rovide the means for disconnecting common sense learning from the narrowly ideological impact of mass media, the regressive tendencies associated with hypermasculinity, the rituals of everyday violence, the inability to identify with others, as well as from the pervasive ideologies of state repression and its illusions of empire (235).

According to the same author, "self-reflection and the desire to resist material and symbolic forces of domination are central to an education model which refuses to repeat the horrors of the past and engages into the possibilities of the future" (235).

In the study reported here, our main objective was exactly to create the space for the participant teachers to reflect on the stories they knew about violence, torture, and murder related to the long period of political domination during the Military Dictatorship in Brazil and reimagine possibilities for resistance to similar events that may happen in the future.

5. Research Context and Methodology

The research context for the study reported here was a graduate course on English teaching (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages - TESOL) at a big public university in Brazil. Participants in the study were all in-service teachers who were enrolled in the course, which comprised 300 hours divided in 3 independent modules of 90 hours each plus an online module of 30 hours. The course content was in general focused on teaching methodology,

especially from a critical perspective, introducing new approaches to language teaching, such as Critical Literacy and Multiliteracies.

Fostering a reflective attitude from the student teachers, the course didn't involve any test or other forms of summative evaluation. On the contrary, the evaluation was based on discussion seminars, which might help teachers learn from each other and rethink their own views, values, and beliefs. During the course, one of the topics for the discussion seminars was the memories of the Military Dictatorship in Brazil and how teachers of English might use Brazilian History to raise awareness of their own students and help them resist old and new forms of power imposition and violence. At the end of the course, the student teachers did a final reflective activity as part of the course evaluation scheme. The reflective activity consisted of three optional questions about the possible contributions of the course to the participants' personal and professional life, about how the course could contribute to future changes in the social context of the participants, and, finally, about their memories and related stories of the Brazilian military period.

Data was, thus, generated from the written narratives of the participants' experiences, which were produced as responses to the final reflective activity. There was a total of 32 student teachers enrolled in the course, but, as the questions posed in the reflective activity were optional, that is, they could choose which one they wanted to answer, only nine teachers answered the question on the Brazilian military period.

Naturally, the participants' reflective production was characterised by first-person narratives, as we will see in the analysis presented in the next section. According to Jerome Bruner, narratives and stories are a way of thinking, a way of organising human experience. Besides, for David Schaafsma and Ruth Vinz, "narratives have the potential to provide complex explanations" (1) of human experiences. In this sense, we were particularly interested in the "details, complexities, contexts, and stories" (1) of the participant teachers, which could reveal experiences and memories related to the Military Dictatorship.

Therefore, in the next section we report on the results of a type of research that fits the qualitative paradigm and is also characterised as narrative research in the area of teacher education. Due to the lack of space, in this paper we will only discuss five of the participants' narratives.

6. Results

For the analysis that we will present here, the narratives generated in the final reflective activity were numbered **N1** to **N5**, in order to avoid the identification of the research participants.[7] Some of the narratives discussed in this section were analysed under different themes and, therefore, may be discussed more than once. The narratives were originally written in English and have been only minimally modified so as not to cause difficulty for the reader to understand. Some of the sentences in the narratives are highlighted in italics in order to make it more clear to the reader the part of the excerpt we are referring to.

As we will see in the excerpts presented and discussed in this section, the research participants debated several themes in their narratives. Some reported family stories that spoke of relatives who suffered during the military period. Others, although they did not experience the period of military dictatorship, believe that they still suffered its influence. The reports speak of effects on education, repression and silencing, artifacts and school practices related to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship, as well as lessons that extend beyond the present day. The participants' narratives, therefore, as we shall see, speak of the past, the present, and the future, as a form of resistance to never let it happen again.

To start with, we present the first excerpt of one of the narratives, which was numbered **N1**. This participant's narrative shows that, in education, there are still many influences from the Military Dictatorship, such as censorship of certain classroom contents and student silencing:

> **N1:** Although I was born at the end of Brazilian Dictatorship, my family was very influenced by that (…) I heard lots of stories about censorship and even though I wasn't personally affected by that, *I know that my education was a reflection of those dark days. (…) Controversial items were not part of the class, and students didn't have much voice.*

7 As the research we report here involved human beings, the original project was submitted to the evaluation of the Research Ethics Committee and was approved on Aug. 23, 2018 (no. CAAE: 95164418.0.0000.5149).

As we perceive in the excerpt above, this participant was born after the end of the Military Dictatorship. The memories she has come from the stories told by her parents. Although she herself has never experienced the dictatorship, the stories she tells may remind us of the Dictator-Teacher, who prohibits certain topics to be discussed in class and always keeps the students silent.

The next excerpt also belongs to a participant who did not experience the Dictatorship herself:

> **N2:** The only related story I have of the Brazilian Military Dictatorship *is actually the story of my life, and why I became the person who I am today*. It goes back to the version of the *story I know about my grandfather.*

This participant-teacher, as she reports, has not lived during the Military Dictatorship. However, the narratives or stories told by her family about her grandfather during that time are part of her identity. She also talks about how certain artifacts help people preserve memories of the past:

> **N2:** I grew up reading *my grandfather's books* and his notes about the content. (…) We also had *a street sign*, from a real street in our city, that carries our last name and there was also *a building* in the city in honour of my grandfather.

In this excerpt, we see how artifacts, such as books, a street sign, and even a building, may trigger memories of the past. Others, for example, buildings and streets named after influential figures from the military period, may help preserve the history that the Dictatorship tried to silence and erase.

Another participant also talked about silencing. He mentioned how censorship worked during the military period. Agents from the government would listen to songs and watch films in advance to judge whether they should be censored or not. In the excerpt below, this participant refers to how people tried to escape censorship:

> **N3:** When people, mainly the musicians, got to criticize the Dictatorship, it was through *songs whose lyrics were disguised so as not to be censored.*

Besides talking about stories from the past that they inherited from their parents and grandparents, some participants talked about the present and how the discussion on postmemory and the military government in Brazil still has supporters:

> **N4**: Fortunately, I didn't go through that horrendous period of our History, but *it frightens me to see many people claiming for the return of Military to power,* which evidences the sheer ignorance of part of the population of our saddest memories. (…) [it] epitomises *the importance of our past memories in the construction of our identities as citizens and people.*

In this narrative, once again we see that this participant is too young to have lived during the Dictatorship. She calls it a "horrendous period of our History", due to the many atrocities made by the government and those in power, such as violence, torture, and even murder. In this excerpt, there is a kind of complaint regarding the lack of work on memory in Brazil and how important this topic is for the construction of identity and, consequently, for the exercise of citizenship.

The last excerpt from the participants' narratives we are going to discuss in this paper talks about the future. The participant was also born after the end of the Military Dictatorship and, in her narrative, she says she doesn't know any stories from this period. However, through the discussions we had in class during the course, it seems she has learnt something:

> **N5:** I have not been taught critical thinking to understand that I should have questioned those attitudes, but neither were my parents. *Hope I can bring some awareness to someone as an educator from now on.*

As we can see, this participant-teacher recognises the need not to allow her students to stop thinking critically about the atrocities of the past. Although she says, in her experience, she wasn't taught to be critical about power and violence, it seems from now on, as a professional, she wants to help preserve the memories of the past by bringing awareness to her students.

The narratives discussed above show several instances of the construction of the identities of these participants. From the stories they heard from parents and family, to what they experienced at school and expectations for the future in terms of both their own development as teachers and how they may contribute to help foster their students' critical perspectives. In the final section of this paper, we would like to advance a few reflections that may be helpful for future research in the area of memory and critical language teacher education.

7. Final Thoughts

According to Ignacy Sachs, one possible form of sustainability is political sustainability, that is, the process of building citizenship to ensure the full participation of individuals in the development processes of the nation. With this definition in mind, the relevance of memory and postmemory for education is put forward, considering that, according to Mattos and Caetano, "identity construction is highly influenced by the historical nature of the discourses and ideologies that permeate Brazilian society" (239).

As we have seen, the affective turn in Applied Linguistics has brought to our field one more theme as a possibility for research in the area, namely, memory. In trying to put together the affective turn and the critical turn, we have resorted to the concept of postmemory (Hirsch, 1997, 2008) in order to create spaces for participant teachers to reflect on their values, beliefs and attitudes and reimagine new possibilities for the future. Edward Chamberlin believes "memory and imagination are located in the same part of the soul, because they both allow us to see and hear something that is not present" (32). We hope that the participant teachers in this research have encountered ways to intertwine their memories and imagination, re-evaluating the past and reconceiving the future. We also hope that the narratives we have discussed here may inspire other teachers and researchers in Brazil and elsewhere to develop similar projects for teaching and research.

Many of the participants in this study, at the time of data generation, were yet too young to have memories of their own related to the Military Dictatorship. However, they remembered stories told by their past generations that could help them rethink the attitudes of resistance.

Mattos and Caetano rightly remind us that

> Understanding the concept of postmemory may help us notice the role and importance of teachers, including language teachers, in creating pedagogical strategies which are able to produce identities, social relationships, and values which might lead to less injustice and pave the way towards the prevention of traumatic historical episodes such as the Holocaust and Military Dictatorships from happening again (250).

In our view, critical language teacher education may have an essential role in helping teachers become critical of various topics, including local topics

such as the Brazilian Dictatorship, so that they also become able of introducing such discussions in their classrooms.

Silvio Jorge and Margarida Ribeiro, in the introduction to a special issue of the journal *April* focused on memory, bring an important reflection on the topic:

> Remembering is an act of recovery and reassessment, which presupposes the possibility of critical interlocution with the past. We remember in order not to forget; as individuals and as a society, although forgetfulness is the other side of the coin we call memory. We remember in order not to make the same mistake again, to prevent oppression and violence from manifesting again in an overwhelming and insidious way (12).[8]

If we agree with what Jorge and Ribeiro state in the quotation above, we need to find ways to keep the memories of the past alive, so that we can resist oppression and violence. The next generations must be informed of our traumatic and violent events of the past in order to be able to create strategies for resistance to possible similar events that might happen in the future. From our perspective, narratives and stories passed on from one generation to another may create a bond between the present and the past and, thus, pave the way for a better future.

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[8] Our translation from the original: "Lembrar é um ato de recuperação e de reavaliação, que pressupõe a possibilidade de interlocução crítica com o passado. Lembramos para não esquecer; como indivíduos e como sociedade, ainda que o esquecimento seja a outra face da moeda a que chamamos memória. Lembramos para não errar de novo, para impedir que a opressão e a violência tornem a se manifestar de forma avassaladora e insidiosa".

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Challenges and Possibilities for the Development of English Teachers' Agency in the North of Brazil

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1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, the educational policies in Brazil and in the world have been guided to respond to the need to form critical citizens, active subjects that problematise and transform society in the face of new economic, cultural, social and political configurations resulting from new digital media and globalising processes. To achieve such demands, teacher education towards agency is a key factor, since the development of agency in teachers may reflect on pedagogical practices that take into consideration the positions one occupies in society.

As important as the discussion and value of the development of agency among teachers and students and its importance in attending the social needs of a changing society, in applied linguistics, there is an increasing tendency to overemphasise individual agency (see Gray and Block 125), which requires special attention and critique in order to problematise attempts at attributing full responsibility to teachers over conditions that they have no control of. In opposition to a neoliberal agenda, which focuses on isolated individuals in discourses of success and efficiency, this work seeks to understand the construction of the concept of agency as an emerging and contingent phenomenon.

Therefore, this paper, which results from a PhD research (see Landim), aims at exploring the challenges and possibilities involved in teacher agency development, considering a critically oriented English Language Teaching (ELT) in global and digital times.

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2. Method

This qualitative research followed ethnographic procedures for data generation and analysis: systematic field observation of lessons, note taking and analysis of the teaching practices of the community investigated (see Heath and Street 29) by means of connections between language and culture, as well as participant observation, intensive interview and analysis of documents (see André 28).

Using an interpretative philosophical framework, this research focuses on how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced, and constituted in the community investigated.

The community under investigation was formed by three groups of participants. Group 1 was composed of nine student teachers enrolled in the discipline Supervised Practicum IV taught by us at a public university in the North of Brazil between June and September of 2017. Group 2 consisted of two mentor teachers who assisted the student teachers in the Supervised Practicum. Finally, group 3 was composed of one professor who participated in the focus group that ended the Supervised Practicum.

2. On globalisation, neoliberalism and ELT

Globalisation has been described as processes that intensify the interdependency of social and economic relations worldwide, with implications not only at the global and macro-economic level, but at the local and personal level as well. It thus requires an open and reflexive position, which means responding to a changing scenario that escalates social and economic inequalities (see Giddens 61-62). As a response to such a tendency, Sousa Santos (see 395) proposes the development of a counter-hegemonic globalisation, socially oriented and conceived as a pre-condition for the balance in the relation between global competence and local legitimacy.

Some authors prefer to describe globalisation as a form of neoliberalism, or a new modus operandi of capitalism which started to occur from the 1970s on. Dardot and Laval, for instance, explain that neoliberalism has been seen as an ideology and an economic politics informed by such an ideology, founded

on the assumption that the market is a natural entity that should be let free so that growth, balance, and social stability are achieved. Based on the discourses, practices, and devices that determine a new mode of government of subjects following the universal principle of competition, oligarchical groups aim at transforming the economy and society, imposing the law of competition and the corporate model. To do so, it is necessary to deteriorate the institutions and rights acquired by the working class. Despite its destructive potential, neoliberalism keeps working due to its convincing power, acting on subjectivity and social relations, based on generalised competition and inequalities and leading individuals to think of themselves as companies (see Dardot and Laval).

The impact of neoliberalism on education is seen in the transfer from the public to the market sphere, being approached from a managerial perspective, carrying out its logic and terms, such as efficiency and total quality (see Souza 7). Given this context, Patrick advocates the need of the development of agency to resist the imperative of neoliberalism in limiting education to a place where learners and their learning are commodified following an "agenda of wealth production at nation state level via discourses relating to the knowledge economy, the knowledge society, and, more recently, the enterprise society" (2)

In the context of teaching and learning languages in face of globalisation and neoliberalism, English occupies a complex position. Because of the global and colonial heritage of the English language, teaching English as a lingua franca requires a critical approach in a post-colonial, post-method and post-transmission perspective, with participants involved in reflexive and agentive practices of learning and usage (see Kumaravadivelu 2-11). Besides that, it is essential to consider the dialectic relation between global and local, focusing on the value of local knowledge in order to encourage conversation and develop a more pluralised thought and practice about identities and cultures, as defended by Canagarajah (see 20).

Given the context described above, teaching English is an opportunity to question the current thought that there are no alternatives to the logic of hegemonic globalisation and neoliberalism. As Silva states, all disciplines of the curriculum, which includes English, must provide the development of critical citizenship and creative minds. The focus of a critical view of education is on "the formation, not the information simply; a perspective in which contents are seen as subterfuges used by teachers in order to reach the

formation of subjects"[2] (Silva). Silva also advocates that language teaching, is more than teaching structures, syntactic, phonetic, morphologic, or semantic units. It encompasses the awareness that language shapes reality. In the face of that, language teaching involves the expansion of views and interpretations of reality, which occurs by means of negotiating meanings in the socio-communicative interactions of interacting subjects.

3. From technical teacher to critical teacher

Diniz-Pereira provides a three-part model of teacher education, corresponding to three rationalities: technical rationality, practical rationality, and critical rationality (see 39), which correspond to what I call the technical teacher, the reflexive teacher and the critical teacher. In applied linguistics, such a historical path does not mean that one tendency surpasses the other, but that there is a path from training, based on technical rationality, to education and development, based on practical and critical rationality (see Miller 100).

The technical rationality is widespread and is materialised in teacher training and teaching practices limited to the application of theories elaborated by specialists, in which little to no room for reflection and authorship is given to teachers. In ELT, this rationality focuses on linguistic proficiency and methodological knowledge, which should be enough to respond to classroom conditions, in the expectancy of controlled answers.

In reaction to the passivising effect of technical rationality, the practical rationality, which derives from Dewey's view of education, revised and amplified by Donald Schön, arises with a focus on the development of the concept of knowledge in action, in which professionals do not separate what is thought from what is done in the practical context of teaching. It is the teacher, not the specialist, who knows best their classroom and is able to monitor their pedagogical practice, locating problems and adjusting their teaching. Besides that, the reflexive teacher collaborates in the humanisation process of historically situated students (see Pimenta 30). However, such rationality has been criticised for its tendency to overemphasise reflection as an act in itself, not connected to a wider fight for quality education and social justice (see Zeichner 545).

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[2] My translation, as well as all other citations of texts originally published in Portuguese.

The critical rationality is influenced by the works of Paulo Freire, who brings a political dimension to the realm of education. Based on the assumption that education is historically located, has a socio-historical background, and is projected to the future, it is a social activity, not an individual one, and it has political implications. Its problematising and transformative posture approaches the educational practices, educational values, and social structures that base our actions. Critical pedagogy arises from this rationality, pointing to the teacher as a transformative intellectual. In order to accomplish the challenges imposed by the reality of the classroom, it is a pedagogy that empowers teachers and students as it considers their lived experiences brought to the educational context.

4. Agency

Agency has been defined as a subjective element, in contrast to objective conditions that are related to the structure. The gap between subjectivity and objectivity has been filled by theories that integrate them or that conceive the dialectical interdependence between the objective reality and the subjective one (see Buzato 28). One theory of that kind is the structuration theory of Giddens.

The structural theory (see Giddens 1-41) articulates subjects and structure by means of social practices organised through time and space. According to such theory, human practices are recursive, that is, they are not created by subjects, but continuously recreated by them through the rules and resources that compose the social structure. As such, agents reproduce the conditions that make their agency possible, but which also contain the possibility of transformation. Giddens exemplifies that with the use of language for agents to express themselves: they need to follow lexical and grammar rules to be understood by others, but at the same time, the agents update the grammar rules every time they use them. The relation of power is included in agency, once being capable of acting differently towards something carries the capability of intervening in the world or being exempt, even when not acting, the agent may influence a process or a particular state.

Agency is a transdisciplinary concept as it deals with the actions of subjects towards something, never in isolation. Here we are interested in the ecological concept of agency and how it relates to language teaching. In the ecological approach, agency is a variable and a category of analysis of social action which emerges from a variety of contexts, being relational – because

human beings operate by means of their social and material contexts – and temporal – based on the past (iterational[3] dimension), oriented to the future (projective dimension), but located in the present (practical-evaluative dimension), as explained by Biesta et al. (see 23)

A pedagogy of agency (see Martinez 81-82) arises as a response to the need of language teachers to face the challenges of the digital and global society. According to Landim (see 85), a pedagogy of agency adds the educational perspective of literacies to the critical rationality of language teachers. Once literacy studies have a post-structuralist basis, in which language is seen as the place where reality is constructed by subjects, agency is critically founded in the discursive practices of interpretation and socioculturally mediated capacity of action (see Ahearn 112). Hence, if critical pedagogy is based on a Marxist view of language as ideology, the pedagogy of agency understands language as Discourse, that is, socially recognised forms of being and acting in the world, through which we become social beings (see Gee 42). The role of the teacher in a critical rationality is to help the student access the world that is covered by ideology, while the role of an agentive teacher is to give students the opportunity to exercise agency as citizens, that is, recognising themselves as subjects, once the school is a space to construct and deconstruct knowledge (see Martinez 82). Nevertheless, a pedagogy of agency is also interested in a transformative role of teachers and students, thus being compatible with the critical rationality of teacher education.

With what scholars call the third globalisation, new literacies studies consider the implications of changes in communication and literacy practices due to the development of digital technologies. As a result, linguistic differences are disputed and negotiated, as well as meaning and discourse. New literacies studies (see Lankshear and Knobel) then contemplate the diversity and plurality of interpretations that constitute the social practices in which meanings are produced, assuming the development of agency as central to their educational goals. On the one hand, the opportunities of agency development are increased for there are more possibilities of engagement in meaning making in the new media, based on a variety of semiotic resources. On the other hand, critical literacies allow people to amplify their reading of

[3] Emyrbayer and Mische define the iterational dimension of agency as "the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time" (971).

the social world. In such readings, not only is the reader the author of a certain interpretation but also the protagonist of himself or herself in relation to the world, an educational movement named subjectification (see Biesta 440).

5. Challenges for the development of agency: the neoliberal perspective

Even though English is the language that vehicles the neoliberal globalisation, being an English teacher in basic schooling involves discourses of failure, once English teachers are placed in marginalised positions in a logic that favours competition over income and prestige, which represent success. Following the neoliberal logic, teachers are not successful because their work does not result in financial success.

One of the effects of the neoliberal logic on education is that the practicum, despite being a locus of collaboration among teachers and student teachers, is also a place where more experienced teachers may discourage student teachers, as we see from the extract below:

> Lúcia: Yes. As in the practicum. Our first practicum, we arrived in the teacher's room, my classmate and I. Many teachers arrived and asked "What are you doing here? You are young! Why did you choose teaching? It doesn't pay, go and do something else". We looked at each other and were silent. We kept thinking "Is this a reception? Our first practicum with experienced teachers. I felt disappointed, not in the sense of quitting, but that thought "Why are they saying that? They are certainly not happy about their Jobs to say that" (09/20/2017)
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> INTERVIEW – Lúcia – Excerpt 14

In the extract above, Lúcia reports a situation that occurred before the data was generated, with teachers that did not participate in this study.

However, it is used here to help us understand some notions that are present in the context of the research. The difficulties of the teaching profession should not be ignored, but the posture of discouragement is founded on an individualistic perspective, compatible with a neoliberal view of professionalism and personal success that is connected to financial income. In the teachers' discourse, the fact that the profession does not pay means that it does not contribute to a personal and financial satisfaction that meets the social expectative followed by the neoliberal rationality which establishes a hierarchy of competition and social exhibition as the engines of life. Such discourse is sustained in a neoliberal perspective of teacher agency, which is held by an

acritical understanding of the social organisation that contemptibly places education in a position that does not invite its professionals to resist and develop a critical thinking that could lead to collective transformation and improvement of educational politics and pedagogical practices. The resistance to critical thinking is translated in complaining and discouragement, inhibiting an innovative view that could encourage teachers to find collective solutions to the challenges of the school. Instead, the posture of discouragement guides professionals to individualised solutions, leading to helplessness and abandonment of the teaching career.

Such discouragement also reflects the technical rationality in teacher education based on positivism. In this rationality, it is not expected that teachers reflect or question neither their pedagogical actions, nor the social structure in which their work is organised. Instead, the technical rationality, reinforced by the neoliberal perspective, imposes that teachers receive stabilised knowledge and conditions to reproduce the neoliberal ideology in pedagogical practices based on a fixed epistemology, which goes unquestioned. Thus, the experienced teachers transmit to the student teachers that their knowledge and their actions will be framed in isolation, because that is the way to do in a neoliberal society. The result is a reduction in teachers' agency.

The logic of competition and individualisation of the teacher's work pertaining neoliberalism is also noticed in the extract below, taken from our field notes:

> Students created a page on Facebook with the campaign, but it is still not accessible to the public because it is not finished. Students and student teachers planned that, next week, the 15 students that most publicize the campaign will participate in a raffle of the T-shit that will be made on the last day of the workshop.
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> FIELD NOTES - Excerpt 15

The situation described above relates to an after-school workshop taught by the student teachers Arthur and Fernanda as their teaching practicum. The student teachers had been instructed by their mentor teacher to make their classes different from traditional classes, so that students' engagement could be higher. Taking that into consideration, Arthur and Fernanda planned a campaign against human trafficking, which involved discussions among the group of students enrolled in the workshop, materials to be disseminated around the school community, and a final presentation with the distribution of T-shirts of the campaign. The logic of neoliberalism organises the campaign for

it stimulates competition among students over the T-shirt, with techniques that revolve around marketing strategies, not a collaborative or pedagogical discussion with the school community about the topic. It thus encourages a performance whose goal is to quantify the visibility of the campaign by means of spreading the campaign on the Internet and by means of T-shirts.

The logic of performance to reach quantitative goals attends the neoliberal culture, once it privileges controlling practices to compare and measure results making education operate under the logic of companies, as denounced by Biesta et al. (see 105). Concerning this, the student teacher Karine explores the performativity and controlling practices while describing a syllabus developed by the Secretary of State for Education. This list of contents is to be followed by teachers in the schools that participated in the study, as we see in the extract below:

> Researcher: Do you think that if you didn't have this syllabus, your agency would change? Is this syllabus really necessary?
>
> Karine: No. I think it would be the same. Maybe I wouldn't work on certain topics, maybe I would work on other topics. Many times we see these topics more ahead, working on a certain topic, but students need another. They wouldn't understand and I should have worked on some vocabulary before teaching that content. In grammar contents such as the Simple Present, we also teach the Simple Past. But in this case I teach it, but I don't register it in the class record book.

According to the Secretary of State for Education, the syllabus was provisionally conceived to help teachers organise their classes for a more efficient pedagogical work while they waited for an updated document that would be based on the Brazilian Common Core Curriculum, which was under development at the time the data was generated. The syllabus referred to is considered, even by the Secretary of State for Education, as outdated and limiting, an opinion shared by other teachers and student teachers in this research.

Even so, the syllabus does not stop Karine from making pedagogical choices that better reflect her students' needs, showing that the controlling culture over teachers' performance and results may fail and leave some cracks, that is, opportunities for teacher agency, once the register in the class record book is made by the teacher. These cracks are a possibility of – even little – transgression. This is what leads us to the next section of this paper, which will deal will the possibilities in the development of teacher agency.

6. Possibilities in the development of teacher agency: decolonial break and critical literacies

Opposed to the challenges that impose certain limits to the development of teacher agency in the context under investigation, this section presents elements that compose the positive possibilities in the exercise of the potential to develop teacher agency.

Daniella is the only member of Group 3 and collaborated to the debate about agency during the focus group that ended the activities of the Practicum on which this research is based. During one of her contributions, Daniella describes her position in relation to agency as a decolonial break, deriving from a theoretical concept she has constructed throughout her teaching career. However, she contrasts this concept with a situation she experienced in the university where she teaches.

> Daniela: I think our teacher agency is exactly to act for these small breaks in this way of thinking and how to break these thoughts, what we call the abyssal thinking. This colonizing thought, this thought, I would say, of common sense that learning the language is something just globalizing.
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> **FOCUS GROUP – Daniela – Excerpt 34**

Daniela's view of teacher agency coincides with a post-modern epistemology in which micro and fluid actions of rupture intend to deconstruct the abyssal thinking, described by Sousa Santos as a system of "invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of "this side of the line" and the realm of "the other side of the line"(1). This system characterises modern Western thinking derived from colonial appropriation and violence, which excludes social groups - and their knowledge - for belonging to the other side of the line, dehumanising them and making impossible the co-presence of social groups.

In Daniela's speech, English carries a colonial heritage that excludes social groups when considered as only a commodity, a way of thinking that resonates the neoliberal agenda that confines English to a hegemonic view, which Daniela calls "common sense" of globalisation as globalised localism (see Sousa Santos 396). In this sense, English is a phenomenon that reaches a great number of people out of its original context. Daniela confronts such discourse with the idea of small breaks, highlighting that there are other

reasons to learn English rather than the market. In a decolonial perspective, these small breaks make visible abyssal lines that separate and hierarchise social groups, giving place to a border thinking that leads to epistemic disobedience (see Mignolo 6). The decolonial option, then, is an analytical effort to overcome coloniality, a term conceived by modernity/coloniality scholars to designate the underpinning logic of colonialism which ground modernity from Renaissance to the current day. In other words, it is the ongoing effect of colonialism (see Mignolo 1-10).

Following these epistemic breaks, Mariana, a student teacher, reminds us that the knowledge she built in the university through the engagement in critical literacies encouraged her to seek for activities in which critical literacies are involved in her teaching practices[4].

> Mariana: The question of teaching not only content, but teaching values and criticality. There was a very good professor, I remember she taught us vocabulary about food and she also taught us about hunger. She discussed the production of food, the starvation, the distribution of food around the world and I thought it was amazing to work like that and I try to bring it to my classes. In my classes in the private school there is the topic family. Then, there is only vocabulary, but I will explain that there are different kinds of family, that there is the family in which the parents are divorced, in which kids are raised by their grandparents. But, you must respect, even so they love us and I like it so much that I say that I'd really like to do something in psychology. I like it, I think it is interesting.

INTERVIEW – Mariana – Excerpt 44

The idea of small interventions is found in Duboc, who defends a bottom-up set of actions, feasible in the individual dimension, departing from readings and collective formations that make teachers aware of opportune moments of intervention, planned or not, which are called cracks (see 212) or critical moments (see Pennycook 132). The awareness that enables teachers to identify such moments relies deeply on teacher education that allows professionals to overcome the technical rationality and build upon the critical rationality in which the pedagogy of agency is situated.

In the excerpt above, the projective dimension of agency is exemplified in the intention to transform the traditional teaching, which has not prioritised criticality and expansion of meaning making. When describing the topic of

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[4] Mariana was working as an English teacher at a private elementary school even though she had not finished her graduation course at that moment. That is a very common situation in the context we investigated, due to the lack of English teachers in the region.

food, proposed in the English language syllabus, Mariana expresses her wish of proposing a problematising pedagogical practice towards the capitalist production system, by approaching the question of economic inequality that results in hunger, as she witnessed her professor do. About describing families, which is also part of the English language syllabus, Mariana adds an inclusive perspective to the development of her work, by valuing the diversity of possibilities in the organisation of families. Such inclusion opens the space for representativeness, which is an important means of recognition among subjects. Thus, based on the iterative dimension of agency, sustained in the critical literacies practice of a professor at the university, Mariana also mobilises the projective dimension of teacher agency "for" and "with" students, including varied perspectives that result in an expansion of her students' meaning making movements, as she includes problematising practices of the productive system and adds more viewpoints to a collectivity of interpretations.

7. Final remarks

Besides situating the implications of learning and teaching English in a neoliberal and globalised society, we reviewed the historical proposals of language teacher education in Brazil, as we see a recent tendency of problematising the traditional and technical role to give rise to a more critical positioning entitled to teachers.

Built upon a critical perspective of teacher education, teacher agency arises as a response to the need of problematising and transforming the social world as we are faced with the challenges imposed by neoliberal globalisation and digital technologies. By means of the practices of critical literacies, agentive teaching is open to pluralise meanings and diversify the positioning of subjects in society, expanding views and ways of being in the world. That means that abyssal thinking, which hierarchises social groups based on a colonial inheritance, is to be deconstructed for more democratic relations and opportunities of learning and acting in the world. Thus, a decolonial perspective is welcome to agentive practices, especially considering the status of the English language in developing countries such as Brazil.

Even so, the development of teacher agency is limited by the effect of neoliberalism in education, in discourses of failure, hopelessness, and a sense of individualism to face the challenges of the profession.

The discussion above intended to contribute to the field of language teacher education, by adding the literacies and decolonial perspectives to the critical rationality that has been recently valued in pre-service and in-service teacher education. However limited our action is, we hope the discussion goes forward, resulting in transformative and agentive practices of language teachers for a more pluralised and just society.

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Chinese International Students and the COVID-19 Crisis

Jing YU

1. Introduction

Given that the uneven power relations within the global context have led to the production of a Western-dominated higher education landscape, the international student mobility is highly asymmetrical and unidirectional from developing countries to Western universities, primarily to English-speaking destinations (Marginson). However, the flow of global knowledge is opposite, namely from the American-Western metropolitan centers to the rest of the world, solidified in mass media, press, and publications (see Shi-xu). Undeniably, the United States and China as receiving and sending countries are the key players in today's transnational edu-business service industry (see Dervin and Simpson; Luke). In the past three years, over one million Chinese international students have studied in the United States, contributing with 45.3 billion dollars directly to the United States' national economy and institutional revenues (NAFSA, 2018). Such one-way academic mobility not only satisfies host countries' immediate demands of economic gains but also naturalizes Western ways of thinking and knowing in higher education through language, pedagogy, and academic research.

In the US context, being a Chinese international student brings with it a minefield of stereotypes. On the one hand, as Asians, the Chinese international students are viewed as a "model minority" (see Lee; Wu) and "unassimilated Other" (see Lee, Wong, and Alvarez; Chang and Morris) for their racialized physical appearance; on the other hand, they are still viewed as "poor ELLs" (English Language Learners) (see Zhang and Beck) and "FOBs" (Fresh off the Boat) or new term "FOPs" (Fresh off the Plane) (see Talmy; Shin) because of their perceived language-related deficiencies. Besides, due to cultural

stereotypes, they are frequently reduced to "CHC learners" (Confucian Heritage Culture) and "Chinese learners" (see Watkins and Biggs; Chan and Rao; Jin and Cortazzi). The Confucian culture that Chinese students inherit is often blamed for its mechanical memorization rather than critical thinking skills as essential in Western culture of learning. Recently, popular stereotypes both in the US and China revolve around "the second generation of the rich" (see Hu et al.; Zhu et al.) due to China's resentment against the nouveau riches and the misinformed Western mass media (e.g., films like "Crazy Rich Asians"). What is worse, under Trump's administration, Chinese students are even labeled as "spies," "cheaters," "job stealers," "Chinese Communist Party agents" (see Watanabe; Hamilton), which further stigmatizes and demonizes this already silenced student group. Most seriously, as US-China tensions are intensifying and the COVID-19 pandemic is evolving, Chinese international students have been politicized across national borders, at an unprecedented level. Those who managed to go back to China were cyberbullied by Chinese nationals on the internet: they are either accused of spreading the virus or portrayed as "spoiled brats" who enjoy the privilege to fly back from COVID hotspots (see Feng; Zhu).

Academic research, although not as sensational as media representations and mainstream rhetoric, falls into a similar trap of epistemic dominance and epistemological racism. Empowered by Western-biased theories and methodological issues, most previous studies not only fail to counter ethnic stereotypes but ironically confirm Western stereotypes about its Other as well as implicitly sustain dominant narratives of Western superiority. These studies tend to take research participants' voices in face-to-face interviews to support researchers' presumed ideologies and beliefs relating to the social realities. However, there is no reflexivity of the power differentials between interviewer and interviewee, and there is no reflection of the power asymmetries between developed and developing countries on the global level. As a result, Chinese students' unpleasant feelings and negative overseas experiences are often disguised or obscured by language shock (see Agar), culture shock (see Adler; Oberg), learning shock (Gu), academic shock (see Ryan and Carroll), transition shock (see Bennett), etc. in the existing literature.

Therefore, in this article, I seek to challenge the cultural essentialism and uncritical roots of existing literature, with the aim to expose long-standing patterns of the Western totalizing discourse in higher education research. Then, I introduce an innovative paradigmatic approach to the construction of

discourse: Chinese Discourse Studies (CNDS) (see Shi-xu). Through adopting this alternative epistemological and methodological positioning, I investigate how Chinese students respond, as cultural agents, to stigmatized stereotypes governed by culturalist and nationalistic ideologies. According to the general principles of CNDS (particularly Chinese dialectics, harmony, self-criticism), I offer multiple concrete analyses to illustrate the necessity of taking a culturally conscious and critical perspective to understand contemporary Chinese discourse and communication in times of the COVID-19 crisis. Taken together, CNDS can be a potential de-colonial option to depart from the deep-seated scholarship in Western intellectual supremacy and a visionary framework to advance multicultural discourses about international education.

2. Critical Review on Chinese International Students

When it comes to the research of studying abroad, particularly Chinese international students in Western higher education institutions, the given divergent conceptualizations of thinking between the East and West can be traced back to Hofstede's cultural studies. While working at multinational corporation IBM as a consultant, Geert Hofstede collected and analyzed data (1971-1973) from over 100,000 individuals from 40 countries. He developed a matrix that differentiates national cultures through a culturalist and essentialist approach. In Hofstede's cultural dimensions, the Eastern and Western people have simply been categorized into the seemingly "scientific" categorizations of collectivism vs. individualism, indirectness vs. directness, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, masculinity vs. femininity, etc. (see Hofstede). Though Hofstede's cultural theories have been constantly criticized for overgeneralization and oversimplification of people's behaviors, opinions, and attitudes, a plethora of studies (e.g. see Lewis; Bolten) still uncritically cite his work as background knowledge or *a priori* to presuppose the cultural contrasts between the "us" of the West and the "them" of the Other.

In addition, building on the "Hofstedian legacy" (Holliday, *Intercultural Communication and Ideology* 6), theories of cultures of learning (see Jin and Cortazzi) and learning belief (see Li) are successively developed to account for the Chinese students' various shocks mentioned above and examine the students' difficulties in a new sociocultural context. Traditional cultural attributes seem to serve as the trouble-free, innocent, and normative explanations for human

behaviors, but, in effect, most of the time, they are manipulated to "produce and reproduce a coordinated, systematic, and global discourse of academic hegemony" (Shi-xu, *Discourse Studies and Cultural Politics* 5). Gradually, the role of culture functions as a cozy blanket (see Ericksen), a lazy explanation (see Pillar), a determining force (see Baumann), and an excuse or alibi (see Dervin and Machart) to explain why East Asian students are obedient, silent, taciturn, and lacking in critical thinking (which are stereotypical cultural assumptions). This false cultural profiling not only provides a mechanism for freezing the traits of the cultural group but also strengthens particular knowledge about Eastern images of the inferior Other based on the West-controlled order of cultures.

Besides using cultural essence to justify students' observable behaviors in the Western classroom, another failure lies in the adoption of interview methods as the primary means of generating data to investigate Chinese international students' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences toward a range of phenomena (e.g. see Cortazzi and Jin; Gu and Maley; Heng). Specifically, participants' quotes in these studies are taken at face value as the "facts" or "truth" to present the research results. Here, I argue that the qualitative interview seen as a research instrument rather than social practice is problematic in three aspects. Firstly, researchers consider the given context as a mere legitimate resource for interpretation of text/talk/discourse but fail to historicize how the legacy of Western colonialism and imperialism shapes the social reality of one-way student mobility, language ideologies, instructional methods, policy practices, program development and beyond. Secondly, researchers tend to take ostensibly value-neutral lenses to engage international higher education issues without reflecting on their own ontological, epistemological, and ideological assumptions underpinning interview methods. Thirdly, there is a lack of reflexivity in power imbalances between the researcher and researched. Interviews are collaborative work, which means the researcher's involvement has a wide range of spectrum from less engagement to full input throughout the process of the relational inquiry. In other words, researchers are more or less intersubjectively involved in the co-construction of the enactment of the dialogue. Hence, inequalities of interview relationship between the participant and researcher will probably distort the vulnerable participants' discourses of their experiences and perpetuate neo-racist, neo-essentialist scholarship in academic research.

3. Epistemic Dominance and Epistemological Racism

No matter biased dichotomization on cultural differences or predominant usage of interview methods without reflexive orientation in previous studies, it is clear that Western colonial/imperial politics of knowledge production is still prevalent and persistent in certain strands of educational research. As early as the age of European Enlightenment and Reason, Western-oriented discourses and Eurocentric epistemic dominance have been evolving into the "universal" or "legitimate" knowledge and perspectives within global order of things, such as race, nation, language, culture, value, etc. (e.g. see Billig; Fairclough; Foucault). This US-dominated global hierarchy does not mean harmony and peace but dominance over and prejudices against the cultural Other through century-old colonialism and imperialism (see Shi-xu). After WWII, the Western position of power was usually defined by dominant institutions (higher education, government, mass media, press), exercised through semiotic (discursive, communicative) means, and documented in academic research and publication (Social Science Citation Index). Hill Collins states that because elite white men control Western structures of knowledge that pervades mainstream academia, the explicit manifestation is an epistemic hierarchy that privileges Western ways of knowing and reasoning over non-Western insights (see 251). That is to say, The Western has intellectual authority over the Orient at the expense of silencing other forms of knowledge. Thus, the differentialist discourses on culture play a decisive role in constructing the non-Western as culturally and morally deficient. By the same token, they offer the contrasted images of the idealization of the Western Self (see Bhabha; Said; Spivak).

Epistemic dominance compels researchers of color to believe that Western scholarship of the valid knowledge development is the universal standard or norm, so it is easy to fall into "the trap of Othering" (Holliday, *Intercultural Communication and Ideology* 21) by lacking criticality of the underlying assumptions, motivations, and values that inform research practices. For those who are awake to epistemic dominance, they are implicitly manipulated via epistemic violence in the global context of power imbalances. For example, Kubota presents herself three real-life experiences in academia: the scholarship from the geographically Global South is considered as "not global enough"; the scholars' Asian names are "unattractive" to the audience in the publisher's point of view; the knowledge production on the non-Western

location is marginalized in North America. These hidden excluded experiences remind us that racism has many faces. The perceived epistemological hegemony that privileges white Euro-America-centric knowledge associated with native speakerism is still widespread in scholarly activities and discourses. Along with individual and institutional racism, epistemological racism is more insidious, implicit, and abstract as it is entrenched in today's academic knowledge system, typically operating by means of research (see Scheurich and Young), curricula (see Yosso), and pedagogy (see Ladson-Billings).

As Scheurich and Young explain, epistemological racism does not mean research conspiracy in favor of white people, but these dominant epistemological "clothes" arising from social history and culture of the dominant race cater better for white researchers because they are cultural products (socialized members of a speech community). They feel comfortable to be named, discussed, and explained based on Western notions of culture, religion, race, and class. I do not mean to reject Western contribution to world civilization, but these self-defining norms, rules, standards to decide the entire world certainly make non-Euro-American individuals feel distorted and misrepresented. Instead of continuing Western-centric academic traditions in the pursuit of so-called "truth," one approach to de-colonialization is to disrupt the rules of the research game and bring to the foreground unfamiliar, marginalized, and otherwise principles of knowledge production to reclaim control over localized ways of knowing and being. In response to this demand, a Chinese scholar, Shi-xu, develops a culturally innovative paradigm to expand the human intellectual horizon from "a historically-reflexive-and-critical perspective" (Shi-xu, Prah, and Pardo 23).

4. Chinese Discourse Studies (CNDS)

According to Shi-xu in *Chinese Discourse Studies*, there are two fundamental, interrelated assumptions of this nascent paradigm in discourse studies (see 25). One is that different human communities (inter)act differently; the other is that the world is deeply unequal and inequitable linking to the legacy of Western colonialist and imperialist history. With decades of globalism (Stager), Western research output not only elevates itself as the truth-teller or meaning-maker to silence otherwise voices but also tends to make meaning for other cultural communities (Asian, African, Latin American) without culturally critical awareness. At this juncture, Chinese discourse studies (CNDS) serves as

a particular example to counter epistemic dominance as well as provide local, indigenous knowledge to enrich the understanding of contemporary Chinese discourses. In the following, I outline critical theoretical and methodological components within this fledgling paradigmatic construction and explain the importance of these unique elements to interpret Chinese people's discourses and communication.

To begin with, the primary theoretical mechanism underpinning CNDS is to seek, create, and maintain societal harmony through a *dialectic* lens (see Shi-xu). There is no denying that after the century-old humiliation of foreign aggression, the top priority for contemporary China and Chinese people is economic development and social stability. To pursue this goal, Chinese people are accustomed to employing cognitive and discursive strategies to rejuvenate ancient civilization and reclaim the voice on the world stage. The term here "dialectics" is specifically referred to the Chinese philosophy of *yinyang* in *The Book of Changes*, a holistic-everchanging-balanced form. One example would be the Chinese phrase *weiji*. Though it is translated into "crisis" in the English-speaking world, the two Chinese characters signify "danger" and "opportunity" in a dialectic way. Since the concept of *yinyang* means the mode of change, the oppositional situations of "danger" and "opportunity" are interconnected and interchangeable as a whole. Such dialectic properties are imbued with today's popular proverbs (misfortune is what fortune depends on, while fortune is where misfortune is hiding) to recognize the positive side in a negative situation. Specifically, in times of crisis or disaster, the Chinese are inclined to think of the good side or the possibility of dynamic change.

Another essential principle underlying CNDS is to express agreement and avoid extreme binary statements, which is premised on Confucian classics of the Golden Mean, *zhongyong*, and harmony, *he*. This salient feature is also reappropriated by the central government to strive for building a harmonious society in hopes of coping with social inequalities emerging in mainland Chinese society as a result of capitalism with a Chinese face. In this sense, the concept of "harmony" is not simply an ethical principle but a constituent of a power structure with political reasons. The third theoretical principle can be "self-criticism first" (Shi-xu 160). Chinese discourse culture operates under the rule of meaning production through self-retrospection and self-critique. This is not a private matter but a public duty in modern China to ensure conformity with the Party line (see Chilton, Tian, and Wodak). Nevertheless, with the evolution of *yinyang, zhongyong,* and self-reflection, many symbolic

characteristics, such as indirectness, vagueness, silence, complexity, and even contradiction, are often seen and heard in Chinese public discourse. They are often mistakenly interpreted as lack of analytical or critical thinking and short of "I" voice (e.g. see Ramanathan and Kaplan; Ramanathan and Atkinson) from white Eurocentric perspectives in discourse studies.

Aside from theoretical components, CNDS provides particular methodological tools to examine how (re)balance and dialectic are achieved, consolidated, and maintained in discursive activities. Shi-xu developed a distinct methodological framework to describe, analyze, explain, interpret, and evaluate discursive events. Within this culturally particular framework, twofold aspects are emphasized to achieve the criteria of cultural coexistence, equality, and prosperity. For one thing, text/talk/discourse and social context are considered as a dialectic whole. In existing mainstream (critical) discourse analysis, context construction is usually used to be an unproblematic interpretive resource to make sense of text/talk/discourse, which implies the causal or constructive relationship between these two separate entities. But in CNDS, text/talk/discourse and social context are subject to continuing dialogue and negotiation. That is to say, context is not the external resource to be drawn upon or taken-for-granted to be interpreted; it is in a dynamic relationship with text/talk/discourse. For another, the researchers and researched should be considered as a dialectic whole, too. When analyzing Chinese discursive practices, researchers should pay particular attention to intersubjective, co-constructed, and dynamic researcher-participant relationships instead of static one side of speaker/listener (sender/ receiver). To keep the equilibrium and harmony of communication, the Chinese interlocutors tend to use textual or contextual strategies to balance and rebalance disequilibrium or power relations of domination. And often, such practices are indirect, vague, and non-verbal (beyond forms of communication). Like many Asian students, the Chinese interlocutors are used to employing the "active listening" strategy (e.g. Liu; Starosta and Chen) in intercultural dialogue or group discussion; unfortunately, the hidden discourse is easily missed through general discourse analysis studies.

Considering these distinctive theoretical and methodological components that are misinterpreted, misunderstood, or even ignored, I argue for the exigency of paradigm shifts in epistemological positioning and the necessity of a critical perspective to investigate the discourse of Chinese international students. Throughout the extensive literature about study abroad and intercultural communication, the idea of *linguistic/cultural/ national difference* as a more benign signifier is often used for legitimating artificial divisions and dualism

as homogenizing blocs: for example, us versus them, host versus guest, domestic versus international students, and native English speakers versus non-native English speakers. Nonetheless, without including global inequality involved to cause students' unpleasant feelings and negative overseas experiences, it is tough to identify research as a site of ongoing struggles between the interests and intents of the West and those of the Other. In short, any discourse analysis concerning meaning-making must be involved with analysts' or researchers' existing frames of reference, so I should make it clear that CNDS is neither objective nor value-free. CNDS itself is open-ended, dynamic, interconnected, and ever-changing, seeking critical dialogues with the prevailing epistemologies to further deepen understanding of human knowledge.

5. Data and Methods

This work emanates from a larger study that focuses on Chinese international students' experiences in the US higher education institutions. Compared to researcher-driven, one-shot interviews, I adopted critical ethnography to consider students' trajectories over time and provide a "local understanding" of their lived experiences in the US. One of the frequent methodological failures in qualitative research and ethnography lies in the subjective implicatedness of researchers and their potential impact on research participants as I described above. Given that, I carefully reflected on my positionality to be more aware of my individualistic biases and pre-existing assumptions. More practically, informed by Holliday and MacDonald's work in intercultural research (see 621), I decided to put aside the long-standing categories with neo-racist, neo-essentialism implications. Instead, I placed existing systems of power and oppression at the center of discourse analysis and amplified stigmatized voices. For example, with regard to the research on study abroad that I am interested in, rather than sticking to the grand narratives of nation and culture as the default starting point, I shifted my research focus to examine how these international students react to the uneven power relations within the global context and how they exercise their agency freedom to cope with stigmatization in transnational mobility. Through students' small stories or counternarratives, we can make sense of how current global inequality prevents racially minoritized groups of students from academic and social engagement and how structural systems negatively impact international

student experiences in the US. Ultimately, my research agenda is to advance the discourses about international education and advocate epistemic justice for scholars of color and marginalized academic communities.

The primary method was semi-structured, in-depth Zoom interviews in the middle of the coronavirus (July 2020). The outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis has disrupted the lives of international students who cross the national border to study in the US. Due to campus shutdowns, instruction has been dramatically affected because of the difficult transition to remote teaching and learning. Besides, when the US president quickly used the term "Chinese virus" to associate the infectious disease with an ethnicity, Asian people, including Chinese students, immediately faced a resurgence of the "yellow peril." Moreover, US-China relations and unpredictable visa-related policies are uncertain in Biden's presidency. All these have caused students' psychological stress and probably hindered their academic progress. During the interviews, research participants were asked to discuss their educational experiences amid geopolitical tensions between the US and China and their reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic and COVID-19-related stereotypes.

The participants of this study were enrolled at a US research university in the University of California system. Altogether, I interviewed 21 participants across all academic levels (4 incoming first-year students, 6 sophomores, 5 juniors, and 6 seniors), whose majors range from physics to philosophy, mathematics to the theatre. Interviews were conducted in Mandarin, each lasting around one hour, and were recorded with the consent of participants for transcription. All the participants are identified by pseudonyms. Based on the qualitative data that I collected, I found three principles in CNDS that play a significant role in contemporary communicative events and activities among Chinese international students amid the COVID-19 pandemic: 1). Chinese dialectics, 2). Chinese harmony, and 3). Chinese self-criticism. Concrete examples are offered to explain how Chinese students as active agents employed these discursive strategies to construct narratives to handle a sudden emergency and stigmatized images in the educational sector.

6. Finding: Chinese Dialectics

As alluded to above, endorsed by many Chinese classics, the wisdom of dialectics, a mode of change (*yinyang*), has been an essential part of the Chinese discourse and Chinese way of living. Rather than use binary and polarized

thinking patterns, Chinese people are inclined to believe that oppositional situations (such as heaven vs. earth, good vs. evil, gain vs. loss) are always interrelating, interpenetrating, and interchanging in a meaningful whole. Since the yin and yang coexist inside everything and these two opposites are constantly changing, everything is in permanent flux and can transform into its opposite. This is the case especially when there is a crisis, disaster, or conflict; the dialectic approach in CNDS can serve to recognize the positive side in a troubled situation and highlight the possible way of change. Like this COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese international students prefer to consider it a valuable life experience for self-growth and self-directed learning.

6.1. "I think we definitely grow more quickly in adversity"

When I asked students whether the pandemic negatively affected their study abroad experiences, what I got are pretty positive responses. Instead of viewing the virtual instruction as learning loss, students expressed that this global health crisis can be regarded as a test or trial to speed up their personal growth and further enrich their overseas experience.

> Kress: I feel although this pandemic has a lot of negative effects, I think it also brings us many positive educational opportunities. First of all, **I think we definitely grow more quickly in adversity**. When the pandemic just broke out, news came to you from all sides, so you need to filter the information and choose what to believe and what not to believe, including whether or when to return home. I feel it needs a process of thinking on one's own. If there is no pandemic, I will not get such a great exercise.

From Kress's accounts, he stressed despite this pandemic that has many negative aspects; it was thought to be a drill for him to develop the skill and ability to sift various sources of information independently. Here, Kress took the dialectical perspective to explore the potentially beneficial side of this crisis to think positively and believe this global health crisis can better prepare him to face the future hardship in life.

6.2. "I learn to take a close and thorough look at this situation"

In addition to resilience enhancement, other students deemed the outbreak of coronavirus as a good learning opportunity to immerse themselves

into learning American politics and international relations at this particular time.

> Qichen: actually, this coronavirus provides us with an opportunity to view different approaches to coping with this kind of public health crisis under different political regimes. Last quarter, I also took a class on Comparative Politics, so to speak, the contrast is very striking. Then, all kinds of features of American politics, catalyzed by the pandemic, especially in the election year, **I learn to take a close and thorough look at this situation.**

Similar to Kress, Qichen also discovered the good side of this pandemic. Along with the course on *Comparative Politics*, Qichen found this pandemic and pandemic-related issues throughout the election year helped him better understand how two different political regimes (China vs. the US) cope with this global health crisis. Through his learning and lived experience in the US society during the pandemic, Qichen was equipped with relatively objective and comprehensive lens to observe this situation in a holistic worldview. While pandemic disrupted traditional study-abroad experience, both Kress and Qichen showed their optimistic attitudes towards unexpected challenges, worked on the positive aspects, and made an effort to come out with something good based on Chinese dialectical epistemology. To sum up, Chinese dialectics has profoundly influenced the Chinese way of thinking and living, so the unity of *yinyang* opposites is the key to understand Chinese hopefulness and optimism in many developmental issues, such as poverty, environmental disasters, high rates of illiteracy, lack of health care, poor information services, and so on. Because of the faith in changing, Chinese people tend to hold promising world views for the future.

7. Finding: Chinese Harmony

Since two opposites are always interchangeable, the dialectical way of thinking naturally leads to the belief of the Golden Mean (*zhongyong*) in Chinese harmony, emphasizing not to do too much or too little but to do the appropriate amount to keep the balance. The doctrine of harmony helps Chinese people to be more tolerant and euphemistic in responding to others' (negative) evaluations and opinions. Particularly, when encountered with multiple stereotypes constructed by the mainstream mass media and perpetuated by empirical research studies as I mentioned early on, Chinese

international students usually employ cognitive and strategies to seek for conformity and agreement: some express that they have heard these stigmatized representations and sometimes even witness the same kind of students in their daily life; some avoid binary mentality or extreme statements and choose not to defy overgeneralization squarely; others use other-based balanced view to think of things, events, people in their entirety and complexity. Therefore, the purpose of public communication in contemporary Chinese discourse is not to persuade but to be consistent with the interlocutor and the broader society.

As a global health crisis, COVID-19 is distinctively characterized by an "anti-mobility" tendency. To physically mobile students, they face double alienation of virus and stigma from either the home country or the country of temporary residence. In the US context, they are blamed for the "Chinese virus" or told to "go back to your country" when Trump repetitively associates the infection with an ethnicity. At the same time, in the domestic arena, they are either labeled "running virus," referring to those who are the potential carriers of the virus, or "giant babies," a group of spoiled, ungrateful children, which has a close connection with another stereotype of "the super-rich." During the interviews, I asked students to react to these imposed stereotypes circulated in the mainstream media.

7.1. "it makes sense, but I am not in that situation"

Jing: when you heard Chinese students are labeled as "running virus," how do you feel?

Shuyi: I feel that whether they go back or not is their own choice, I can clearly see that international students and those who are not international students have very different views.

Jing: what's the difference?

Shuyi: some told me that these people coming back would increase the domestic burden, and then China couldn't get back to normal so quickly, which would cause more serious problems.

Jing: do you think that makes sense?

Shuyi: **it makes sense, but I am not in that situation**. I am speaking from the standpoint of an international student, if you don't feel safe here, or uncomfortable, there is nothing wrong with you going back.

Instead of the self-oriented image of language users, the other-based balanced view lies in seeking, creating, and maintaining harmonious relationships in Chinese social interaction. Shuyi responded, "it makes sense" to concur with the people whose positions are opposite to hers. She immediately confirmed her emphatic understanding of the opposing views before expressing her own opinion, with the purpose of striving for humaneness in relation with others and with the environment. Hence, in order to accommodate internal tensions, Chinese people will first and foremost legitimize other groups' viewpoints. It is also a common social practice to rebalance the dynamics of contradictions and allow for the coexistence of differences or even oppositions.

7.2. "…but we need to think from different angles"

> Jing: have you ever heard that Chinese students are called "giant babies?"
>
> Ruby: I haven't heard of it.
>
> Jing: "giant babies" seem to be… because China needs to be quarantined for 14 days, and one international student insists on drinking bottled water, and it seems that (the hotel) doesn't provide, they only have a kettle, this student who insists on drinking bottled water, feels like a spoiled baby.
>
> Ruby: I have heard of this anyway, **but we need to think from different angles**. In fact, I have seen a lot of quarantined hotels released on the internet, their hygiene is not up to the standard, so I think both sides might be anxious, and it leads to intensified conflicts, but I think **it is understandable for both sides.** This girl wants to drink bottled water. I think the hotel should provide in advance, they don't provide, but scold her instead, which makes me very angry. But I can indeed understand that they (hotel staff) have undertaken a lot of work, everyone is worried and then quarrel. I think I can also understand that.

Guided by balance and equilibrium, confrontation is not culturally valued in Chinese discourse, but politeness and indirectness are normative and encouraged. Ruby tried to use the discursive approach to minimize conflicts between Chinese international students and hotel staff. She took the middle ground by commenting that "we need to think from different angles" and "it is understandable for both sides" in hopes of achieving a harmonious relationship and peaceful reconciliation. In most previous studies on Chinese students, the principle of Chinese harmony to evade disputes is often overlooked or misinterpreted through the Western discourse analysis. For example, researchers, myself included, can easily hear students' statements in

the interviews that "we Chinese learn by rote" and "we Chinese do as teachers told." However, if researchers merely repeat what informants say as the evidence of a phenomenon without including the Chinese characteristic of expressing agreement to highlight harmony of the society, it is not surprising that the Chinese students' cultural stereotypes are continuously reproduced and perpetuated in academic research publications.

8. Finding: Chinese Self-criticism

The last principle that permeates in the process of communication and interaction is Chinese self-criticism (*ziwo piping*), a form of self-legitimation historically embedded in Chinese discourse practices. For the point of explanatory discourse, Chinese people are used to attributing errors, mistakes, and problems to themselves. Self-criticism as a moral character serves as an integral introspective mechanism in CNDS to be expected to keep a modest attitude and take social responsibility. This also appears when Chinese students react to stigmatization in the US context, from overt racism to covert microaggression.

8.1. "I might wonder if what I said was wrong"

> Ruby: including the class, I also tried to get in touch with American students, but I found, it was the second quarter of my freshman year, there might be discrimination. I took a class at that moment, we had to form a group of four people to discuss a topic, and then gave a presentation. At that time, I, a Black girl, and two white girls. Basically, these two white girls were discussing, and then maybe occasionally the black girl would discuss a bit with them. But when I spoke, these two (white) girls never looked at me and didn't give me any response. Instead, the Black girl often gave me a look or nod. I feel this incident really hit me hard, because at that time, I wasn't confident in my spoken English. **I might wonder if what I said was wrong**, or I didn't express what I meant, so after that quarter, I was worried about speaking to native English speakers. I just wasn't willing to…

From the concept of Chinese harmony, we know that confrontation and argument in face-to-face verbal communication are not culturally appreciated. Instead, the practice of critical self-reflection and self-examination is commonly found in Chinese public discourse to review past actions subjectively. For instance, Ruby, she described her previous social interaction with American students. In her narrative, she mentioned that during class discussion, two white

girls never looked at her and didn't give her any responses, but finally, she blamed herself for possible limited English skills rather than these girls' rudeness and arrogance. In order to uphold societal morality that is emphasized in CNDS, an individual is advised to examine his or her own role first of all (rightly or wrongly) and bear some feeling of responsibility for the negative outcome. Besides oneself, individuals are required to take social responsibility for others in most situations.

8.2. "there might be some problems in our group"

> Ranping: actually, I first realized this (discrimination) because I wanted to work in the [student] dining commons. I went to Ortega (a dining hall) with my roommate, an ABC (American-born Chinese). Both of us wanted to find a job, and that person (the hiring manager), I was stupid at that time, I told him I was an international student, and he was polite, that is the kind of thing he had to say. After that, he said, in fact, I generally don't tend to hire international students, because I had encountered situations before, after they got SSN (social security number), they never showed up again. My feeling at that time was that **there might be some problems in our group**. After we left, my roommate told me directly, that's discrimination, which was wrong. I checked, "Is this (discrimination)?" She said yes.
>
> Jing: you didn't realize, right?
>
> Ranping: because I was a freshman, I didn't know that…

Ranping said, "there might be some problems in our group," attributing the problem not only to the individual but also the group she is associated with. Due to the lack of racial knowledge of the US society, Chinese students tend to get silenced, marginalized, and excluded even without realizing it is an act of discrimination. In this case, Ranping's first response to this hiring manager's racial profiling is to blame this already stigmatized group for their "wrongdoings." In tandem with Chinese harmony, Chinese self-criticism practices might also be manipulated for the purpose of reinforcing and strengthening the cultural stereotypes of a specific student group. In summary, it is important to highlight that both Chinese harmony and self-criticism can be seen not simply as benign ethical principles but as part of a powerful social structure that is bound with mass "conformity" and "unity" in the Chinese context. However, these distinctive Chinese characteristics are elusive from Western discourse studies and perspectives.

9. Conclusions

Above all, drawing upon the significant principles of Chinese discourse studies (CNDS), the study examines Chinese international students' discourses in reaction to the global pandemic and pandemic-related stereotypes. Through the critical analysis of 21students' interview narratives, I find that distinctive traits of dialects, harmony, and self-criticism are often employed to emphasize Chinese optimistic attitudes in times of crisis, the avoidance of confrontation for harmonious communication, and the moral character of self-introspection in order to conform to the norm. These three culturally specific characteristics are interrelated and interconnected. They pervade Chinese normative discourses, which have long-time been mistakenly interpreted from the Western-centric perspectives, models, approaches, and paradigms. This study offers new empirical evidence for the reconstruction of the Chinese paradigm of discourse studies. The study also reveals the inappropriateness of Western scholarship for understanding non-Western linguistic and communicative events and practices.

The Chinese discourse studies (CNDS) is designed to disrupt epistemic injustice and enable us to discover the possibilities of change in the mainstream academic knowledge system. CNDS represents not only an innovative intellectual-cultural approach able to represent the Chinese people but also an alternative epistemological positioning able to develop bolder, more multidimensional, and humanistic frameworks for advancing the multicultural discourses about international education, which is beyond macro-level national cultural comparisons and the researchers' ethnocentric assumptions. To conclude, CNDS can become an exemplary de-colonial option in knowledge and politics in order to assert and reclaim what has been denied, distorted, and obscured in the Western world.

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Mankind is witnessing global transformations; the world is rife with great challenges, yet teeming with opportunities. The papers from this collection belong to researchers who are at various stages in their professional lives and who rely on a wide range of methods



in order to approach the discourse from a cultural perspective with historical or contemporary connotations. Scholars from such fields as communication, (new) media, language, literature, society, culture, or linguistics and education do their best to answer the nowadays uncertain winds of change.

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